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COMMONWEAL

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The Editors on PANAMA

The Laity and the Life of Faith: EMIL ANTONUCCI

BOOKS

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CORRESPONDENCE

Women as objects

El Cajon, Calif.

To the Editors: David O'Brien's thought-provoking article, "Sex on Catholic Campuses" [March 24], addresses the charge of "male dominated" social life. O'Brien confesses he is unsure of what that phrase means, but submits that it may involve "subtle forms of male dominance such as failure to confront in any public way men's assumptions about how relationships are to be initiated and conducted." One example of a not-so-subtle male attitude regarding social relationships between the sexes can be found between the pages of *Commonweal*—in David Carlin's column on John Tower's womanizing ["Fit for the Cabinet," March 10].

Carlin characterizes Mr. Tower's social relationship with women as "womanizing," and unfortunately, his opinion is illustrative of one of the most damaging attitudes men have about women. Mr. Carlin probably does not realize how his opinion presumes the relative low worth of women, and relationships with women, which seem to be held by many men.

Carlin identifies "lust for the opposite sex" as an issue less determinative of ability to hold public office than stupidity: "however destructive it may be in other respects, (it) does not rank high on the list of impediments" for public office. Presumably, Carlin feels that when a man uses a woman as an object for his lust, this is merely another bad habit, like misusing liquor. This reasoning makes perfect sense if one sees a woman as an object like alcohol, not necessarily worthy of respect as another human.

Not only is this opinion stupid (which would count as two strikes against Carlin if he were rating himself fit for public office), it reflects the very discrimination which O'Brien tried to articulate. Male sexual promiscuity is more than a bad habit, especially when it is not recognized by others as a major character flaw, reflecting the man's inherent disrespect for women as objects. Men and women must recognize the negative effects these degrading attitudes based on sex stereotypes can have on attempts to establish mutually respectful and healthy relationships between the sexes.

ANNE K. WRIGHT

Faith in marriage

Lake Tomahawk, Wis.

To the Editors: There is a way Catholic colleges could effectively restore faith in marriage, dethrone sex, and install love as the reference point in relationships ["Sex (How About Love?) on Catholic Campuses," March 24]. Our cultural myth that humans are essentially sexual beings would have to be dethroned and the understanding that we are essentially relational beings accepted in its place.

This means convincing students that self-fulfillment lies in the development of our potential for giving and receiving relationships, recognizing that our relational capability depends on feelings of trust, security, self-confidence, and self-worth. They then may be ready to explore love as a giving and receiving action that is successful when it nourishes these feelings in each.

Although we have relationships on many levels of knowing, a significant ongoing love relationship requires that each understand the innermost emotional needs of the other....But because this knowing exposes us to the risk of emotional damage if the other is unloving, we each have unconscious barriers to emotional intimacy. Overcoming these barriers can be difficult, sometimes impossible, requiring considerable trust and security.

MARILYN KRAMER

Feminism corrodes

Cockeysville, Md.

To the Editors: The corrosive effect on higher education of feminism, the sexual revolution, and libertarian philosophy of the post-1960 era is reflected in David J. O'Brien's piece ["Sex (How About Love?) on Catholic Campuses," March 24] and its responses.

O'Brien is correct in believing that male students' chauvinist attitude toward female students has to do with sex and that it includes sexual harassment, but he doesn't pinpoint the sexual revolution's best kept secret as the basis for their attitude.

Young men know that when they marry, they could spend most of their working life supporting a child not their own; biological fatherhood is dependent upon a wife's sexual fidelity. They also know that premarital female chastity is preferable to promiscuity as preparation for marital fidelity. Studies show that when a man is seriously interested in a woman, he wants to see her as chaste. The success of the women's movement and the liberated culture in promoting female promiscuity under a plethora of euphemisms is evident

(Continued on page 349)

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters should not exceed 250 words and are subject to editing for clarity and space limitations.

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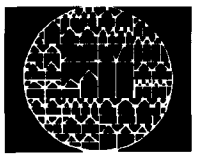

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The perils of Panama

Exit Noriega, enter democracy. That enticing slogan expresses the hope of the three-fourths of the people of Panama who voted for the opposition in the presidential election of May 7. Their aspirations are shared by the peoples of neighboring countries, probably by most people in the U.S., and even by our chastened leaders who once valued General Manuel Noriega's cooperation in pro-*contra* and selective anti-drug enforcement efforts over the freedom of Panamanians. But the bitter reality is that even when Noriega leaves—if he does leave—the journey to democracy will be long and arduous. One election does not make a democracy live.

History and memory—the conflicting memories of Panamanians and Americans—make any such trip the more hazardous. Panama was born in the U.S.A.; we wrested its territory from Colombia in 1903, and helped create its quasi-independence as a state in order to further our purpose of building the cross-isthmian canal. As school children few of us were taught to question these actions; instead we learned to admire the brave struggle to build the canal, so costly in lives and gold. In the succeeding decades, as the bitter battle over the Panama Canal treaties during the Carter administration showed, many Americans had come to regard not just the Zone but the whole country virtually as U.S. territory.

Needless to say, that record of proprietary arrogance is known to and resented by Panamanians, and their resentment is reflected in the ambivalence many of them express about their country's relations with the U.S. They may wish that the U.S. will bring about Noriega's ouster; but if that came to pass the same people might well seethe at continued U.S. intervention. Therein lies a policy dilemma of great delicacy.

The moment to start on the long road to democracy in Panama is not the day after Noriega leaves, but today. And the surest path lies in allowing and encouraging the Panamanian people to find their own way to bring about needed change. In a country where election fraud is predictable and beatings increasingly common, the ouster of Noriega and the accession to office of duly elected leaders are the obvious and essential first steps. But other problems lie ahead.

An organized international drug cartel lurks in the background, collectively more powerful and harder to oust than Noriega. The country, once prosperous, is gradually sinking into impoverishment—exacerbated by the economic sanctions the U.S. applied last year to squeeze out Noriega. Panama's per capita income, high among Latin American countries, must be measured against its national debt and grossly unequal income distribution. One-third of Panama's poor—blacks, Indians, and mestizos—who have never shared in Panama's prosperity survive with only the barest necessities. Many of Noriega's staunchest supporters and most of the military are drawn from their ranks. By contrast, leaders of the opposition movement have come from a small professional and business class that has long benefited from U.S. activities

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and influence. Since democratic government has never been effectively in place, Panama's prospective civilian leaders have little experience upon which to build a stable future. Military commanders who may aspire to political leadership have worked their way up through Noriega's tightly controlled network of corruption.

Not all is bleak. For this election the usually quarrelsome opposition parties succeeded in forming a coalition and supporting a slate of candidates who, by all accounts, won overwhelmingly. The vote for the opposition included not only members of the poorest classes, but up to half the military.

After president-elect Guillermo Endara and his two vice presidents, Ricardo Arias Calderón and Guillermo Ford, were attacked and beaten by paramilitary forces the day after the election, they did not retreat, but appeared in public, notably at Sunday Masses throughout Panama City, calling for a one-day general strike. Despite the arrest of hundreds of its leaders and the disappointingly low turn-out for the strike, the political opposition appears ready to continue its struggle.

The opposition has also been strengthened by Panama's Roman Catholic hierarchy. The bishops, who have issued a series of statements over the last several years critical of Noriega's regime and supportive of democracy, organized parish leaders into observation teams throughout the country and then openly defied the law by making public their independent poll results. They decried the fraud (as they had after the 1984 election) and condemned the violence against "people whose only armament is their unshakable will to live in dignity and peace." In strong language they called on soldiers to disobey orders that contradict the law. It is possible that the church can influence the military to cooperate in the ouster of Noriega, especially in concert with international pressures for Noriega's departure.

Steps toward a regionally coordinated response are being taken. The emerging leadership of Venezuelan President Carlos Andres Perez is particularly important. He has offered Noriega asylum in Venezuela. He called an emergency meeting of the Organization of American States (OAS) on May 17, which condemned the "outrageous abuses" during the election and called for a peaceful transfer of power. The OAS has sent three delegates to Panama to negotiate the transfer "with full respect for the sovereign will of the Panamanian people"; they will report back on the negotiations June 5.

Policy choices made by the U.S. government will be critical. So far George Bush has shown informed restraint. He listened to former President Jimmy Carter's firsthand account of the stolen election; he refused to rush the U.S. into unilateral action; he played down the threat of U.S. military intervention, while bolstering the already sizable U.S. force, adding some 2,000 troops; he recalled the U.S. ambassador and formally recognized Endara as president. American nationals are being encouraged to leave or seek safety on American military bases. At one point, Mr. Bush even argued that the U.S. should refrain from acting like "the Colossus of the North, coming down there to try to dictate to the people of Panama."

Restraint, cooperation with regional diplomatic efforts, depriving Noriega of the opportunity to take American hostages should continue as primary elements in American policy. Considerable pressures can still be exerted by concerted action—from international ostracization and regional economic sanctions to sustained support for the Panamanian anti-Noriega movement. Pressures internal and external may yet succeed; given a face-saving exit, General Noriega may yet retire.

But if the passage of time works in Noriega's favor; if anti-Noriega sentiments and democratic fervor can easily wane, especially under the pressure of continued intimidation and physical brutality against the opposition; if middle-class Panamanians feel they have too much to lose in a long-term, bloody revolution; and if the poor may feel that they have little to gain, then the temptation to intervene militarily will grow. There will be efforts in Congress and elsewhere to abrogate the Panama Canal Treaty. But it is very hard to see what benefit would come to Panama from U.S. military intervention or how U.S. interests would be served by open hostilities between the two countries. At most, Washington should use the threat of multinational military intervention, along with covert signals of U.S. support to the Panamanian military, to encourage military abandonment of Noriega.

Remember the Philippines. Even after Corazon Aquino won

The Commonweal white paper

If all goes well, you will be reading this issue of *Commonweal* with greater ease and therefore, we hope, with greater pleasure. The cause: a new grade of paper of a type called "groundwood matte" offered us by a new printer. Whiter paper stock offers greater contrast to the typeface, leading, we have been told, to easier reading. Faster presses and less absorbent paper mean more ink on the magazine and less on your fingertips (a small bonus for the fastidious). There are, no doubt, some among you who will mourn, as we did, this move from newsprint—part of the *Commonweal* look from the beginning. But good reasons—also part of the *Commonweal* look—led us on to new paper and printer. First, there were the readers who found our "grey" pages hard on aging eyes. Second, there were laments from West Coast readers not about paper, but about late (sometimes very late) deliveries. Third, we had an offer we couldn't resist—not in the end. Credit for the irresistible offer goes to Thomas Brinkman, Jr., at Metroweb (our new printers) who kept coming back to our offices with new figures and new configurations of our printing budget until we had a deal that promises better printing, better paper, and better mail service (from Cincinnati) at no greater cost.

As we said, "if all goes well"—and you will know almost as soon as we do—you should be reading this issue at twice the speed with thrice the pleasure. Enjoy.

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the election, that country's military was critical to the departure of Marcos. Two military leaders gave their support to Aquino. Because soldiers refused to fire on the people, the elected candidates were ultimately able to take office.

While doing no more than encouraging may seem a very feeble first step on the road to democracy, it includes the very useful step of supporting the people themselves to take responsibility for their national fate. Without that there can be no democratic Panama.

DOCTORED DATA

Just over a year ago, Marlin Fitzwater, newly appointed as White House spokesperson, declared it a "damn outrage" that Larry Speakes, his predecessor, had manufactured bogus quotations which were then attributed to President Ronald Reagan. Fitzwater's outrage seems to have cooled.

Last month, acting as President Bush's speakes-person, Fitzwater readily conceded that the administration's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) had altered the words and conclusions of Dr. James E. Hansen's testimony on the greenhouse effect scheduled to be delivered to Congress. Dr. Hansen, of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies, is one of the government's top scientists. Unbeknownst to him, his assessment of global warming trends had been rewritten to substantiate conclusions dictated by the White House's go-slow, free-market-inspired approach to pollution containment. Hansen was distressed that "they should put words in my mouth," adding, "they even put it [a paragraph of their own making] in the first person." Mr. Fitzwater's tepid explanation: Dr. Hansen's views were "not necessarily those of all scientists who have considered this matter." True enough. But James Hansen's views are James Hansen's, not OMB's. And it is the business of scientists, not bureaucrats, to debate and clarify their areas of disagreement with Dr. Hansen, and vice versa.

Scientific inquiry operates by well-defined and generally accepted rules. Its method is intended to be self-correcting; its practitioners motivated by an intentionality that is fostered, if not always by a respect for truth, then at least by the watchful eye of peer review. The ethos of scientific inquiry, despite pressures to produce and publish, is widely shared and maintained by the scrutiny of those employing it—many of whom have helped preserve its integrity at great personal cost. As for the vigor of the scientific quest, it has been underscored by the recent worldwide scientific effort to replicate the cold atomic fusion experiments of two Utah scientists.

Not just scientific integrity was at stake in the administration's adulteration of Dr. Hansen's testimony but the very commitment to truth-telling, the binding factor created when word and intention conform to and are fused with actuality. The fruit of this elemental process is trust, the *sine qua non* of all genuine human exchange, the ground on which any government must stand—and, we want to emphasize, the Bush administration in particular.

In the Hansen affair, science and trust were both abused. Science took a momentary drubbing, but it is thick-skinned and has many defenders. Ultimately the credibility of the scientific community was enhanced by Dr. Hansen's rapid and forthright objection to having words put in his mouth. It was trust that took the harder blow.

Truth usually prevails—eventually. In the Hansen case, its recovery was swift and unexpected. About the administration we are not so sure. George Bush took office with real questions about his integrity and truth-telling capacities left hanging from the Iran-*contra* affair. And recall Mr. Bush's vigorous campaigning on the subject at hand—the environment. Recall the vivid but phony footage in the television commercials attacking Michael Dukakis's alleged neglect of the Boston harbor clean-up. Then consider Mr. Bush's record so far. On the Alaska oil spill, he all but signed on to Exxon's deceptive downgrading of the disaster. On the greenhouse effect, the administration initially tried to read the scientific data through the distorting prism of laissez-faire ideology. On acid rain, its reported plan to enlist market forces on the side of the environment by selling "licenses to pollute" sets a bad example and conveys a false message.

The best (if belated) signal the administration has sent came at an international conference on global warming, where it had been stalling debate. Suddenly, in the wake of the Hansen revelations, U.S. representatives reversed themselves and offered to sponsor an international conference on the subject in this country. We hope Dr. Hansen will even be invited to speak—freely.

GOOD NEWS, BUT...

A draft document on higher education from the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education caused quite a stir at the beginning of this year in these pages ("Loading the Blunderbuss," January 27, 1989) and among officials of Catholic colleges and universities. The document attempted first to define and set goals for Catholic institutions of higher education and then to incorporate them in a set of seventy-two "Norms" that many believed would strip colleges and universities of their autonomy, embroil bishops in endless squabbles with the Catholic academic community, and, in the end, possibly force the secularization of many schools that have struggled to maintain their Catholic identity while meeting the needs of a diverse student body in a pluralistic society.

A group of 130 Catholic higher education officials from around the world (eighteen representing U.S. schools) met with Congregation officials in Rome in April. Reports from the meeting indicate that pleas for recognizing the diverse situations of Catholic higher education and the difficulty of implementing universal norms were met with attention and understanding. A new draft is being prepared and a group of fifteen

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from among the delegates was asked to participate. These are good signs: that education officials spoke up; that Congregation officials listened; that a document dealing with the essential issue—the Catholic identity of Catholic higher education—may yet advance an important discussion.

Even so, a cautionary note should be sounded. Since this is to be a papal document, the pope and his advisors may see matters differently than do the Congregation for Catholic Education and the international delegates; the Congregation could yet revert to its original intent; the new committee of delegates in devising the next draft may find itself co-opted by the Roman agenda and subsequently committed to it. But finally, a document from the top down on a subject about which Vatican bureaucrats have so little experience seems to defy the oft-cited but seldom invoked principle of subsidiarity. The question of the Catholic identity of Catholic higher education is a subject about which sustained discussion is needed and perhaps the "threat" of this draft has done more to focus attention on the identity question than a completed document would have. But it is a multilayered problem over which many people have puzzled. It is not a question that has one answer. Consultation among Catholic institutions of higher education on this issue is likely to be more fruitful for the church than edicts from on high.

SUPREME COURT REPORT

ROCKING THE ROE BOAT

HEARING THE MISSOURI CASE

No case considered by the Supreme Court since its 1954 decision in *Brown* v. *Board of Education* has had as enormous potential societal implications as the April 26, 1989 hearing of the abortion case, *Webster* v. *Reproductive Health Services*. An air of electricity filled the crowd, of which I was one, which stood (or slept) in line all night beside the elaborate marble temple that houses the justices. It was a smaller crowd than waited up for the Nixon tapes argument in 1974, but indisputably more intense. The plaza and main steps of the Court were blocked off out of fear that some of the gathered troops might try to storm the ramparts, which some of them did in the early morning, only to be (rather peacefully) subdued. But there was some of the feeling of war as the prolife and prochoice forces shouted and chanted slogans at each other and waved their placards. For the prolifers, most of whom consider the abortion of a fetus tantamount to murder: "No Judge. No Jury. No Trial. No Defense. No Appeal. No Stay of Execution." "When They Tell You That Abortion Is a Matter Just Between a Woman and Her Doctor...They Are Forgetting Someone." "The Baby Didn't Do Anything Wrong. Sometimes...These Babies Are Left in a Bucket to Die!" Rather elegant literature distributed by the Christian Action Council of Falls Church, Virginia, proclaimed: "When a Single Child Dies, the World Mourns. But When 20 Million Children Die, the World Pretends It Didn't Happen." The Cardinal Cooke Prolife Commission's brochure tried to educate all on alternatives to abortion.

The prochoice signs were perhaps less dramatic than some of the graphic pictures of ground-up fetuses presented by the prolifers, but, they were nonetheless powerful. A handbill of a huge coat hanger proclaimed, with obvious reference to the Holocaust: "Never Again!" "(Before 1973) Back Alley Abortions Claimed as Many as 100,000 Women's Lives Each Year." "Safe and Legal." Another poster demanded: "Religious Freedom"—Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights. It was accompanied by a graphic that looked like a combination of a cross and a menorah, in purple colors reminiscent of Good Friday.

As Frank Susman, representing Human Reproductive Services (and the prochoice view), said in the oral argument, in response to a question by Justice Antonin Scalia:

> The conclusion to which it leads me is that when you have an issue that is so divisive and so emotional and so personal and so intimate, it must be left as a fundamental right to the individual to make that choice under her own attendant circumstances, her religious beliefs, her moral beliefs, and in consultation with her physician.
>
> The very debate that went on...this morning outside this building, and has gone on in various towns and communities across our nation, is the same debate that every woman who becomes pregnant and doesn't wish to be pregnant has with herself.
>
> Women do not make these decisions lightly. They agonize over them. And they take what we see out front and what we see in the media and they personalize it and they go through it themselves, and the very fact that it is so contested is one of those things that makes me believe that it must remain a fundamental right with the individual and that state legislatures have no business invading this decision.

With that, Frank Susman cut to the core of the constitutional debate on *Roe* v. *Wade*, decided in 1973 and the subject of immense controversy ever since. Many respected legal scholars, even themselves liberal, such as John Hart Ely, past dean of Stanford Law School, believe that *Roe* was wrongly decided. They believe that the Supreme Court, in enacting the trimester approach, with viability the significant cutoff point (around six months), acted inappropriately, more like a legislature than a court. These scholars worry about a nation governed by unelected judges who act like Platonic guardians, making decisions for people as to what is "fundamental," rather than by the people themselves, acting through our elected representatives. The central question is: Who should decide? The woman, acting in consultation with her physician? Or state legislatures?

Since *Roe* many state legislatures, notably in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts, have tried to cut back on *Roe*, by protecting the prolife point of view as much as they can. It is analogous to events after *Brown* v. *Board of Education* was decided. The Court, sensing great resistance in many areas of the country to the judicially forced end of segregation, allowed the states to

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comply with its ruling "with all deliberate speed." State legislatures, however, acted with more deliberation than speed. As Frank Susman told the justices: "In fact...almost every southern state without exception passed legislation directly in conflict with that opinion." But some rights are so fundamental—the right to make procreational decisions about bearing and raising a child throughout much of its life, and the right to desegregate education—that whatever public opinion polls or state legislatures say in response to the madding crowd should have no moral bearing whatsoever. The function of much of the Constitution, especially the Bill of Rights, is to protect minorities from the majority.

But the justices questioning Mr. Susman, particularly Justice Scalia and Chief Justice William Rehnquist, weren't so sure. Scalia asked: "[W]hat conclusion does that lead you to? That, therefore, there must be a fundamental right on the part of the woman to destroy this thing that we don't know what it is or, rather, that whether there is or isn't is a matter that you vote upon; since we and medical science don't know the answer, people have to make up their minds as best they can."

The consensus in the press room following the oral argument was that Charles Fried (Solicitor General of the U.S. under Reagan, who presented the Bush administration's argument for overturning *Roe*) was the ablest advocate. He was asked the most difficult constitutional questions. But time was limited; he only had ten minutes. It is unclear why the justices allotted only a total of one hour for oral argument in a case of this magnitude.

The central problem facing Fried now was how to get the Court to overrule *Roe* v. *Wade* without its having to overturn the rest of the privacy protections: "We are not asking the Court to unravel the fabric of unenumerated and privacy rights which this Court has woven....Rather, we are asking the Court to pull this one thread." In *Griswold* v. *Connecticut* (1965), the Court had established the "fundamental" right to marital privacy; it prevented enforcement of a Connecticut statute that proscribed the use of contraceptives by married couples. Earlier decisions had established the "fundamental" right to rear and educate one's children without state interference.

However, an eloquent brief by Professors Frank Michelman and Norman Redlich argued, "decisions about conceiving and bearing children, and assuming parental responsibilities, lie at the core of this Court's privacy doctrine that prevents the state from imposing fundamental values and patterns of life on its citizens." Frank Susman said, in response to Mr. Fried: "...I think that the Solicitor General's submission is somewhat disingenuous when he suggests to this Court that he does not seek to unravel the whole cloth of constitutional rights, but merely to pull a thread. It has always been my personal experience that when I pull a thread, my sleeve falls off. There is no stopping. It is not a thread he is after. It is the full range of procreational rights...."

Fried contended, in response, that abortion was different from preventing conception through the use of contraceptives. A woman's privacy alone was no longer involved after fertilization. There was something else inside her, potential life. Indeed, a main reason why the abortion case is so troubling is that it involves a clash of two very "fundamental" rights—the woman's right to procreate or not and the state's interest in protecting potential life. In *Roe*, with Justice Blackmun writing the decision, the Court split the difference, allowing a woman virtually unfettered discretion to abort in the first trimester, allowing the state some regulatory say in the second trimester, and then giving the state substantial powers in the third trimester, after viability, to proscribe abortion except when a woman's life or health is endangered.

There was much technical argument about the exact meaning of the various provisions of the Missouri statute involved in *Webster*. The Attorney General of Missouri, William Webster (who came across to many as an ambitious politician running for office—his press kit enclosed a glossy photo and an article entitled "The Ten Most Feared Attorneys General," of whom he is one), floundered badly, especially under persistent questioning from Justice John Paul Stevens. Perhaps the most telling point raised, which seemingly caught Justice Scalia by surprise, was brought up by Mr. Susman. He contended that, in the present age, there is no longer any distinction between contraception and abortion, raising doubts about Charles Fried's

Charles W. Pratt

Graduation Speech for Tim, who turned out OK

Like much that matters, baking bread is easy
Enough with good ingredients, a simple recipe:
To water, sweetener, salt and yeast
Add flour, and mix. Oh yes, there's Mystery,
But who demands to understand
When the dough is answering the hand
Under a morning window opened east?
Do they teach this at the University?

Cover the dough; left in the dark alone
It knows to take the next step on its own,
And when it's risen with the sun
Toward noon an hour or two, punch it back down,
Shape it into loaves, and wait
Again while it again grows great—
But not too great: just peers above the pan.
Then, as the good book says, "Bake until done."

The Zen of loafing? Eat a metaphor?
Now's the time to try if bread is more
Than bread alone. Taste. Devour.
Firmly yielding? Moist and crunchy? Or
Evidence scattered on the plate
Of a loaf the knife disintegrates?
You've made it, anyhow. The day is yours—
Yours and the sun's, now at its tallest hour.

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attempted distinction: "The most common forms of what we generally in common parlance call contraception today, IUD's, low-dose birth control pills, which are the safest kind of birth control pills available, act as abortifacients....Science and medicine refer to them as both."

It is unclear how the abortion case will be decided, a decision that will probably not be handed down until late June or early July. My own impression is that the justices will not overturn *Roe* v. *Wade*, but will decide the case, as is customary, on narrower constitutional grounds, perhaps sending some issues back to the Supreme Court of Missouri for clarification. We will all have to wait and see. MAURICE deG. FORD

Maurice deG. Ford is a Massachusetts lawyer, who writes on family law and constitutional law.

AMERICAN SCENE

LOADED TERMS

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

One of the most significant consequences of the current discussion of the name African-American might be a greater awareness of the subtle racism that is often implicit, even if unintentional, in the way the words "minority" and "minority groups" are used. Ordinarily, minority means that one group consists of fewer members than another group whose larger number constitutes it as the majority. For example, "Only a minority of the world's nations have nuclear capability." When used in reference to race and ethnicity, however, the word can be subtly shaded. In the U.S. the term "minorities" is presumed to refer primarily to certain groups: people of African, Hispanic, or Asian origins. More recently it has come to include Native Americans. Oddly, it is rarely used in reference to other groups such as Indian, Japanese, or Jewish people, though the size of each group is far smaller than the African-American population.

Why is it that these groups are not often referred to as minorities? Because the word minority is a loaded term. In newspaper editorials and television documentaries, the word minority is often associated with a host of problems: poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, drugs, violence, and unwed parents. It can be used in such a way that the larger group is perceived as normative. Thus, a story about minorities in America can easily evoke images of a group that is weak, passive, and inferior, lacking self-determination, possessing little that others desire, and having few resources for solving its own problems. The majority group, on the other hand, is strong, active, self-determining, possessing what others need and want, and having the resources for solving its problems. Further, this perception of the groups is applied to their individual members.

This peculiar use of the word minority becomes very obvious when we think of how it is not used. The annual graduating class from Harvard Business School is small, but are its members thought of as a minority in the business community? Few Americans earn over $5 million a year, but does anyone think of them as a minority? Why not?

The frequent use of the term minority group in reference to black Americans can be a tragic reinforcement of the status quo. Used by blacks, it can become a self-fulfilling prophecy: Are you poor and unemployed? Of course you are, you are in a minority group. You will always be poor and unemployed, because your identity is defined as and determined by your not being a part of the majority.

This insistence on the use of the word minority to categorize and contain certain groups of people reaches laughable proportions when newspaper articles and television news reporters make statements such as: "Experts predict that by the year 2010 the majority of people living in the cities of Washington, D.C., Cleveland, Detroit, and Newark may be minorities." Even when Hispanic-Americans or African-Americans make up well over half of the population of a given city, they are still categorized as minorities. That is, they are defined by their relationships to white people even when whites are the minority of the city in question.

Because of this pre-established understanding of the meaning of the word, it becomes impossible for white people ever to be a minority. While much was made of Michael Dukakis, as the son of Greek immigrants during the last presidential campaign, he was never described as a member of a minority group. How did the white population of the U.S., which is made up of people from so many different ethnic and national backgrounds, come to be one massive monolithic group, the majority?

In spite of the so-called melting pot of suburbia, most Caucasian people in this country are very much aware of and justly proud of their ethnic link with other lands. There are Irish-Americans, Italian-Americans, German-Americans, Polish-Americans, Swedish-Americans, Jewish-Americans, and many others. People of these distinct national groups generally cherish their origins, are concerned about political events in these countries, tell stories about and travel to the "old country." They celebrate the languages, music, art, and cuisine of their homelands. The differences among these groups are by no means slight. In the past and present these differences have led to fierce conflicts and even to open hostilities. However, because they are members of the same racial group, their different national backgrounds are not always immediately evident.

Almost every ethnic group that has come to this country has suffered from prejudice, and residues of it exist to this day. Each one of these groups, strictly speaking, is a minority. That is, it is smaller than the whole. But Americans of European origins are able to be simply Americans, when they want to be, only occasionally calling attention to their specific ethnic heritages. As a result, a somewhat homogenized population, made up of many different national backgrounds and simply called "white people" has become the so-called majority in relation to all

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others, who are forever minorities.

Black Americans do not have this freedom. There are very few circumstances, if any, in which they are treated simply as Americans. Yet the name "blacks" does not link them to a larger group or a larger history beyond the United States.

Because of the ravages of slavery most African-Americans have no way of tracing their origins to a specific country in Africa, such as Nigeria, Ghana, or the Ivory Coast, even though the parts of Africa that were most heavily involved in the slave trade are known. Nor can most black Americans sort through the complex tangle of African ethnic and tribal groups and identify their roots definitively as Ibu, Yourba, or Mandingo. Thus, the name African-American associates them with the whole continent of Africa and its ancient, rich, complex history and culture. It links them with the over 450 million people in Africa itself, as well as the tens of millions of people of African stock in the Caribbean, the West Indies, and South America. If the name African-American helps black people in this country to become more conscious of their historical and racial links with over 600 million people all over the world who have Africa as their genesis, this might go a long way in combating the negative connotations that are almost immediately associated with the expression, minority group.

The world is a multiracial, multi-ethnic, and multicultural habitat for humanity. White people do not constitute the majority of the world's population. The eventual banishment of this problematic use of the word minority would challenge all people not to focus attention on who and what people are not, but on who and what they are. EDWARD K. BRAXTON

Rev. Edward K. Braxton, a priest of the archdiocese of Chicago, is the theological consultant for William H. Sadlier book publishers. He has traveled frequently to Africa and is the author of many articles on African-American Catholics.

OF SEVERAL MINDS Abigail McCarthy

AN UPHILL BATTLE

THE WORK OF CONGRESSIONAL WIVES

The furor over Betty Wright's job must have surprised the special counsel to the House ethics committee. It is doubtful that he expected the repercussions which resulted from questioning the reality of her work in the course of his investigation of her husband, Speaker Jim Wright (D-Tex.). It is true that there seems to be little or no record of what Mrs. Wright actually did for the $18,000-a-year job with Mallightco, and its perquisites of a car and expenses. Still, questioning her was seen as casting doubt on working spouses in general and congressional spouses in particular.

Support for Betty Wright came from unexpected quarters. Myra McPherson, *Washington Post* writer, who has authored a book called *The Power Lovers* about congressional wives—a book which could hardly be called sympathetic to its subjects—wrote with understanding about Betty Wright's situation. She noted that in a city where the name of the game is access and former senators can be paid hundreds of thousands of dollars for making a few phone calls (remember John Tower's defense?), it is hard to say that the speaker's wife was not worth the comparatively small amount she was paid for the advice she claims to have given.

Arvonne Fraser, wife of former congressman and present mayor of Minneapolis Don Fraser, is currently Senior Fellow on the Women in Public Policy Project at the Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota. She is widely known as "a person in her own right." Before coming to Washington in the 1960s she was chairwoman of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor party in Minnesota and a member of the Minneapolis Welfare Board. Since returning to Minnesota she has served as her party's nominee for lieutenant-governor. Fraser rose to Betty Wright's defense with an op-ed piece in the *New York Times*. She wrote that, according to all reports, Mrs. Wright is a capable woman who had to give up a good position on the staff of a congressional committee when she married her husband. Fraser found herself "shaking with fury" as she wrote, remembering all too well her own experience as a congressional wife. So little had changed.

Feminist columnist Ellen Goodman wrote, "I understand the opportunities for power-couple corruption. But is this to be a new line of ethical inquiry: 'What does your wife do for a living? Is she really doing it?'.... The country has moved toward the two-worker family with all its overlapping, complicated, and somewhat messy problems of two workers and one marriage. Now, belatedly, the issues are hitting Congress."

Of course, the issues are not just now hitting Congress, but events are highlighting them once again. The plight of the congressional wife is, in many ways, the plight of all married women writ large, and today's problems surfaced with them long ago. Today the wives of officials are expected to work, as other wives are, to help defray the expenses of home-buying and educating children if for no other reason. But even when I came to Washington in the late 1940s the relatively small congressional salary of $10,000 never quite stretched far enough to cover the cost of two homes and the trips back and forth to the districts and states. A good number of wives worked—then, too—at least part time and for the same reason. Most worked in their husbands' offices. A few were beginning to sell real estate.

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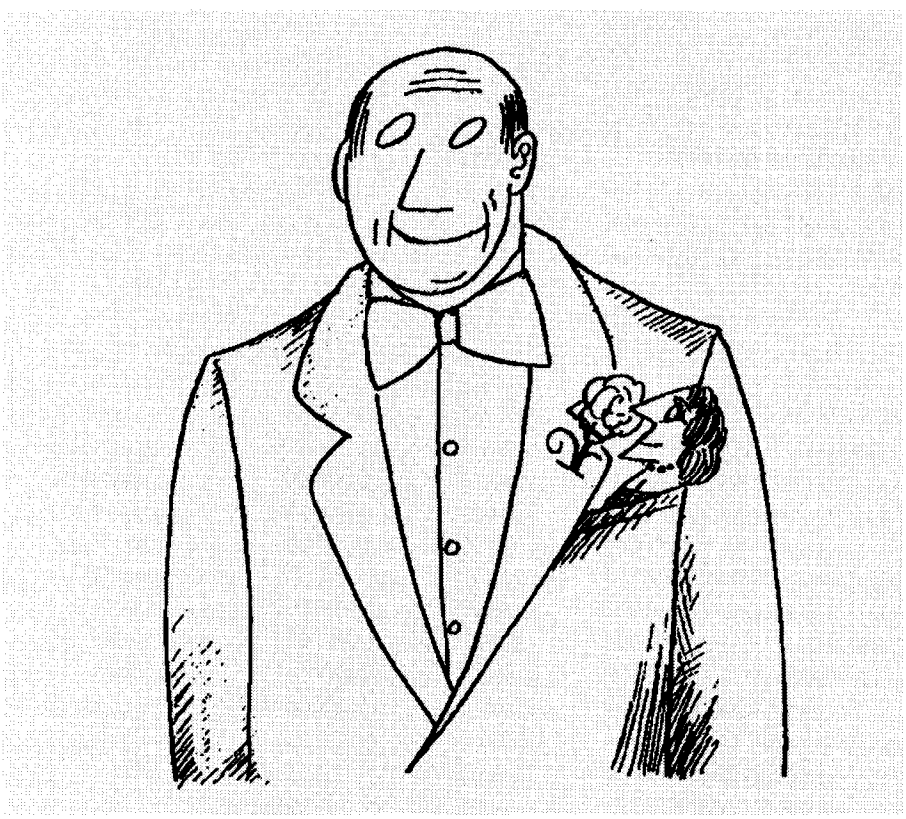
(Interestingly enough, many of the working wives were southerners, acting in the tradition of the southern ladies who rallied to the support of their husbands and families in the days of dire poverty after the Civil War.)

The wives working in their husbands' offices were often invaluable in their service to the constituencies. Having campaigned their husbands' districts and states, they knew the problems and needs as no other employees could. Because they represented the congressmen in a special way, they also had access to agencies of government more easily than did other assistants. They had influence.

In the early 1960s the Congress, in a fit of sanctimonious self-policing initiated by some of its newer members, passed legislation forbidding the employment of any family members on congressional staffs. It was popular legislation—lauded by the always critical press, and pleasing to those constituents who thought that they or their relatives might well be earning the money then going to congressional spouses. The legislation added insult to injury by not exempting the wives who had been working for years—many of them as administrative assistants or directors of district offices. (It was proof of their value that many of them continued to work on a volunteer basis, doing what no one else could do as well.) It is, of course, almost axiomatic that nepotism is bad, but, in retrospect, this legislation destroyed the concept of a congressional couple working as a team. A line had been drawn which affected the wives' status and sense of self-worth. It affected all wives whether they worked or not. A congressional wife took her identity from her husband but she could not be, in any real sense, his partner.

In the 1960s Arvonne Fraser was so shaken by her loss of identity in Washington that she threatened to attend cocktail parties with a book to read and wearing a sandwich board labeling her "wife of Congressman Fraser." Twenty years later wives like Jo Ann Emerson of Missouri and Janis Berman of California complain that no one takes them seriously or bothers with them. Is this loss of identity any worse for them than it is for any other wife leaving the home community in which she has, perhaps, been known since childhood and has a somewhat independent life and a separate image? Is it any worse than it would be in New York or even in one-industry towns like Akron? The answer is a reluctant "yes."



In Washington the office is all-important and attention gravitates to the office-holder so forcefully that others may feel invisible. I once walked across the Capitol with Elizabeth Taylor, then a Senate wife, and a few other women on the way to a Red Cross luncheon. In corridors full of tourists hardly a head turned as one of the most recognizable women in the world passed by. She was just one of a bevy of women in a place where few women are important. To a woman who is the focus of a spotlight during two years of campaigning, as most Senate wives are, and who knows that she has made a valuable contribution, the sudden relegation to the background can be devastating. We have seen this effect magnified in the case of presidential candidates' wives like Betty Ford, Eleanor McGovern, and Kitty Dukakis. It is there, too, in the cases of the most determinedly conventional, old-fashioned spouses of those in lesser office.

Add to this the expectation of most contemporary women that they will be allowed to rise to their full potential in the jobs and professions for which they have been prepared. A congressional spouse who is a lawyer, however, has difficulty finding an area of the law unaffected by legislation on which her husband is required to vote. Businesswomen and women working in the media have the same problem. Government regulations affect the more traditional fields like education and health care. The spouse must work; she wants to work; but where? No matter what the rhetoric of equality, male spouses of women office-holders do not experience the difficulty to the same degree.

The situation of the Washington wife is not new. Eighty-one years ago The Congressional Club, a quasi-educational, quasi-social institution, was founded by an act of Congress so that wives would not feel lonely when they accompanied their husbands to the capital. Other organizations and support groups have multiplied but, as we have lately seen, wives still keenly feel their anonymity and isolation. The root of the problem lies, I am afraid, in marriage itself—marriage under twentieth-century conditions—a problem we have not begun to solve. □

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THE SWISS DEBATE THEIR ARMY'S FUTURE

COSTLY SYMBOL, MIGHTY MYTH

ADOLPH SCHALK

Late this year, for the first time in history, the voters of a European nation—Switzerland—will decide whether to abolish their own army. Though the odds are strong that the electorate will say "No," the very posing of the question is an astonishment. In this century only one country in the world, Costa Rica, has taken the radical step of demilitarizing itself (1949). Other precedents hold little significance. Leaving aside such vest-pocket sovereignties as Monaco, Vatican City, and Andorra, only two smallish nations—Liechtenstein (pop. 30,000) and isolated, NATO-protected Iceland—make do (and thrive) without a military.

That the vote will take place in Switzerland is even more surprising. For the Swiss, "armed neutrality"—a policy in force for nearly two centuries—is the bottom line of a way of life, a political icon once thought to be the most sacred of cows. Every able-bodied male Swiss is required to serve in Switzerland's unique *Miliz* (militia) system. Each citizen-soldier keeps his uniform, repeating rifle, and ammunition at home to make possible the rapid mobilization of a 600,000-man force; after seventeen weeks of basic training, he will be called up for military refresher courses at regular intervals until age fifty, receiving only pocket money for pay. Conscientious objectors (450 a year) can expect a three- to twelve-month prison term with no provision (as in other Western European countries) for alternative community service. Worse, CO status carries with it a prison-traitor stigma that functions like a blacklist for many jobs and promotions. In contrast, to be in good standing in the army (and, preferably, to hold high rank) helps open the way to successful careers.

The American journalist John McPhee summed all this up in a much-quoted sentence: "Switzerland doesn't have an army. Switzerland *is* an army."

Nonetheless, on November 25 and 26, the Swiss will decide the future of its military establishment in a referendum officially known as the "Initiative for Switzerland without an Army." The vote is made possible by the country's unique system of direct democracy; any group capable of gathering more than 100,000 signatures from Swiss citizens on a given issue has the right to a national referendum. In this case the idea was first propagated in 1926 by a Social Democratic cabinet minister, Max Weber, and a pastor of the Reformed church, Leonhard Ragaz. In 1982, some 100 men and women between eighteen and eighty-six established the "Group for Switzerland without an Army" (GSoA). In 1986, the group, backed by environmentalists, pacifists, and others, collected 111,300 valid signatures and put the issue on the ballot.

At first, despite this success, practically no one but the organizers took the initiative seriously. Then in 1988 the well-known Swiss writer Roman Brodmann, the initiative's "spiritual father," produced a documentary called "Slaughtering the Sacred Cow" that made a powerful case for the cause. It was vetoed by Swiss TV but a West German station whose signal easily reaches most of Switzerland put it on the air, and the issue came alive. The program woke up the populace while also alerting the EMD (Confederate Military Department) to the challenge.

From the beginning proponents of the initiative have been harassed, ridiculed, faced with anonymous bomb threats, and otherwise mistreated. Rental agreements for halls have been canceled on short notice. Tenants have been evicted. For months volunteers stood shivering on street corners to collect signatures, stoically withstanding the daily barrage of insults: "Shame on you!" "You must be off your rocker!" "Aha, you want to abolish the army and then phone the Russians, 'You can come now!'" Backers have been accused of treason, of planning to break down the democratic system, of jeopardizing a pillar of Swiss society, even of endangering the foundations of the Western world.

Members of GSoA, in fact, are neither radicals nor kooks. Among them are such personalities as Paul Parin, Zürich psychoanalyst, sociologist Jean Ziegler, Theo Ginsburg, an instructor at the world-famous Technical College ETH (famous alumnus: Albert Einstein). Friedrich Dürrenmatt and Max Frisch, Switzerland's most famous writers support the initiative.

But proponents are clearly a minority. Most politicians, most of the media, and nearly two-thirds of the population remain

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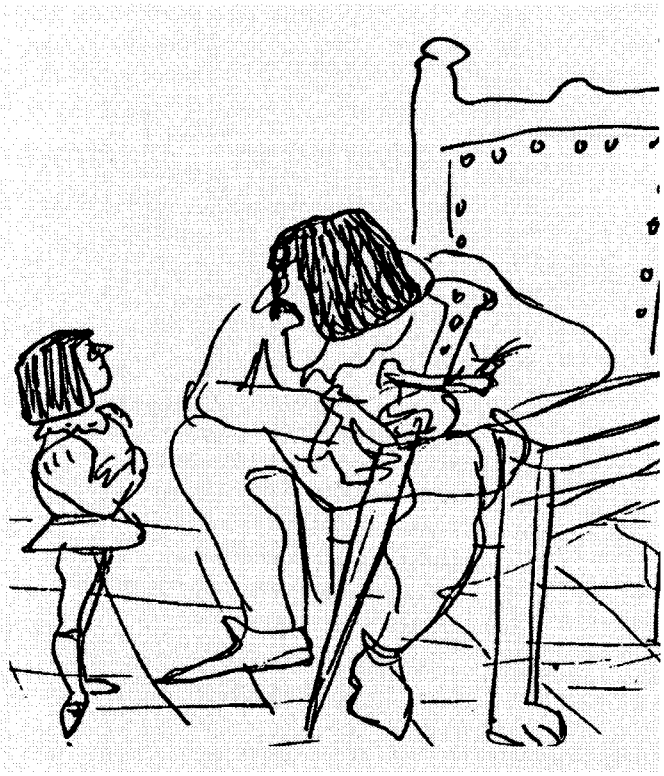
strongly opposed. The mass-circulation boulevard daily, *Blick*, gives the initiative as much chance as the proverbial snowball in Satan's home quarters. The respected Zürich daily, *Tages-Anzeiger*, commented: "It's like trying to flatten out the Alps." Because a biggish wing of the Social Democratic Party favors the initiative and the party as a whole is ambiguous about it, the same accusations hurled against the organizers of the initiative have been made against two party members who serve on the *Bundestrat*—the seven-member cabinet elected by parliament that exercises Swiss executive power. Leading politicians from the other (conservative) parties demand that they resign from the cabinet and join the opposition. The Swiss government report on the initiative asserted that pacifism is one of the causes of war. It held that countries such as Norway, Denmark, and Austria were overrun by Nazi Germany during World War II because they were not adequately prepared militarily.

Yet the critics don't have it all their own way. Historian Werner Rings questions the government thesis in a heavily documented book, *Die Schweiz im Krieg* (*Switzerland during the War*), asserting that "the Swiss Army knew how little it could cope with the vastly superior German Air Force. Of twenty-one flier corps, only three were functional. Five flier groups had to be sent home because there were no aircraft."

People who don't know Switzerland tend to think that its Alpine terrain makes it easy to defend. But three-fourths of the population live in the heavily industrialized lowlands. Swiss historian Edgar Bonjour has reprimanded the WWII army, "which was safely garrisoned in the bunkers of the Gotthard massif, while leaving the inadequately guarded population along Germany's borders completely exposed."



"WHY don't you want to go to war to preserve feudalism?"

Other cherished myths are being punctured. Hans A. Pestalozzi, a former battalion commander turned anti-army activist, asks: "Why should Hitler have invaded Switzerland? We gave him everything he wanted: foodstuffs, weapons, munitions, transit rights. Money and gold were safely hoarded in our banks. We even yielded to his request for censorship."

Swiss media recently gave wide coverage to a report by a GSoA journalist that names names. According to the report, the father and uncle of the current defense minister, Kaspar Villiger, made huge profits by buying several cigar factories from Jews fleeing the Nazis. The two paid fire-sale prices, and then operated the factories as subsidiaries to their own family-run Swiss-based cigar firm. The report alleges that the new owners also signed an agreement not to hire Jews. It is an open secret that hundreds of Swiss firms made similar deals with the Nazis; that thousands of Jewish refugees in Switzerland were heartlessly returned to the border; and that the ignominious "J" (for Jew) stamp in German passports was invented by the Swiss, not the Nazis.

Moving from past to current history, a question often put by non-Swiss observers, "Who would even want to conquer Switzerland?" gets a short answer from the GSoA: "Nobody." Initiative supporters point out that all the neighboring countries—France, West Germany, Italy, Austria—are friendly democratic nations with no inclination or foreseeable incentive to attack Switzerland. Moreover: "Defense in a modern war is a mortal illusion. In a European war there will be only losers. Our army wouldn't change anything."

In peacetime, though, the army certainly does make a difference: It is both enormously expensive and omnipresent. Neutral Switzerland spends nearly $1,000 annually per capita for defense, far more than any other West European nation. More than a billion dollars has been budgeted in 1989 for armaments alone—$196.8 million for twelve transport helicopters, for example; $302.5 for Stinger anti-aircraft weapons; $139.3 million for new combat clothing and other infantry equipment. The 1990 budget earmarks another $1.5 billion to buy thirty-four new combat aircraft to be added to the present force of 300 jets.

All this to defend a nation with a population of 6.5 million that could fit comfortably inside West Virginia. And these are only the direct costs. Swiss industry literally donates more than 13 million lost working days annually to the army, at a cost of nearly $1.4 billion. The Swiss Bank Corporation alone keeps a surplus of 406 male employees on the payroll to compensate for the time spent in military service.

In so small a country, moreover, the army finds it difficult to operate without constantly colliding with somebody's interests. Though "the world's oldest democracy" can hardly be called a police state, one encounters the military everywhere. It takes supersonic fighter jets only four-and-a-half minutes to fly across the entire country. The noise pollution at the air base near Zürich reaches intolerable levels. When a reporter asked why the screeching jets could not be replaced by smaller, quieter

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aircraft in peacetime, the answer was testy: "Form-1 racing drivers don't train in Volkswagens either."

The army is notorious for flexing its muscles. Crops and fences are destroyed, choice farmland and nature sanctuaries are arbitrarily taken over for maneuvers or confiscated for shooting ranges and other permanent installations, causing altercations with the citizens affected and with the Greens (environmentalists). Frequently, helicopters collide with funicular cables or high tension wires. During recent border maneuvers the Swiss army accidentally caused a forest fire that destroyed a large area of Liechtenstein's nature preserve.

Such factors weigh on the side of the initiative and may account for a rise in its popularity; favored by only 13 percent of the people in 1986, it registered an amazing 37 percent approval rating in a poll published in *Tages-Anzweiger* on April 21 of this year. (Moreover, 54 percent of respondents in the recent poll believe the army's budget should be cut drastically, and 80 percent do not believe the Swiss army could cope with a nuclear attack.) Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost* has persuaded a growing minority that the Soviet Union is no longer Public Enemy No. 1. As elsewhere, the Greens have made sharp gains both regionally and nationally, and other priorities—pollution, crime, drugs, terrorism, AIDS—have emerged.

Nevertheless, even GSoA members agree that their proposal is most unlikely to prevail. History provides an easy debating point: The Swiss army has not been called into action against a foreign invader since the Treaty of Paris (1815), proving (say its defenders) that its existence in strength has deterred any attack. Even stronger than history is myth, and, in my judgment, for the Swiss the myth of the army ranks with the legendary feats of William Tell. It is a sandbox militia armed to the teeth against a phantom, a shadow-boxer whose opponent never enters the ring; and yet its hold on the Swiss imagination is not to be broken.

Much of this obsession is psychological. Many Swiss agree with foreign observers that they suffer from a mass inferiority complex, arising partly out of a bias against Germans that is rooted in envy and fear. German-speaking Swiss especially are often uneasy in the company of Germans, a tendency reminiscent of the way southerners in the U.S. respond to Yankees. The harsh, Prussian-like intonation of northern Germans comes across as arrogant and overbearing, whereas Swiss German dialects, with their penchant for diminutives, are homey, familiar, almost childlike. In this reading, attachment to the army is a way of compensating for Swiss self-perceptions.

It may be, moreover, that Swiss men, not having suffered the realities of war, are free to romanticize its trappings. Many are marksmanship freaks. There are hundreds of outdoor rifle ranges all over the country, with ear-splitting rifle practice every weekend. One of Zürich's biggest annual events is the *Knabenschiessen* (Boys' Shooting Contest), conducted outdoors in a county fair atmosphere. The army plays to this mentality by staging air shows, parades, weapons exhibitions (often combined with carnivals), army-related sports events.

Despite the heavy odds against passage of their referendum, members of GSoA don't feel they are wasting their time. They point out that the campaign for women's suffrage was carried on for years before it gained adoption in 1971. The initiative, they say, is a unique chance to stimulate re-thinking on an obsolete Swiss institution. And they hope the campaign will at least lead to incremental reforms: alternative civilian service for COs; tighter restrictions against arms exports; arms reductions; perhaps even a decline of militarism.

The GSoA speaks glowingly of a "comprehensive peace policy" to replace militarism. It urges more international cooperation combatting the causes of war—hunger, destitution, chauvinism, racism, religious fanaticism, ideological intolerance, unresolved conflicts of interest. On the domestic side, however, even some Swiss who agree that the army can no longer provide national security see a serious weakness in the GSoA's program. They argue that abolishing the army would create a vacuum of power that would leave the country wide open to vandalism, riots, vigilantism, police abuse, and—unlikely but possible—even anarchy. The GSoA's alternative—a civil guard somewhat like Costa Rica's, to handle disasters, riots, and emergencies—is widely seen as vague and unconvincing.

In mid-May, contrary to general expectations, the two dominant Christian confessions, Evangelical and Roman Catholic, issued a joint formal statement that might best be described as "neutral in favor" of the initiative. Though the four-page document says that church members may vote either way in good conscience, its emphasis falls on arguments supporting passage. Even a purely defensive war, the statement says, must be judged immoral if it is likely to bring disproportionately destructive effects.

The joint church statement declares that, in the absence of an "unyielding" search for peaceful solution of conflicts and of "convincing" efforts to overcome injustice and misery in the world, a "Yes" to defense would be "ethically untenable." Moreover, the statement praises the initiative for prompting sustained reflection and discussion on a topic not usually open to debate. It was prepared by the Justice and Peace commission of the Swiss bishops' conference and the Institute of Social Ethics of the Swiss Evangelical Church Union.

On the merits, the GSoA makes a forceful argument to the effect that the Swiss army no longer makes a lot of sense, militarily or economically. Admittedly, this is one Goliath that won't fall to a slingshot; to most Swiss, the initiative still seems a piece of insanity. But the GSoA is digging in for the long haul and thinking in terms that go beyond Swiss borders. Recently a government minister hailed a nineteenth-century countryman, Henri Dunant, for conceiving a "crazy idea," the Red Cross; because of Dunant, said the minister, "125 years ago Switzerland was the cradle of a movement that bound nations together." The GSoA "Quoteline" carried this comment on the minister's observation: "We have nothing against a successor, some decades hence, using these very same words apropos the anti-army initiative." □

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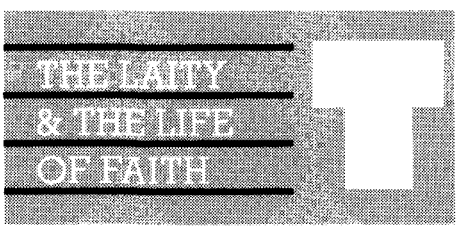
OUR TASK IS TO CREATE WORLDS

AN ARTIST & THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD

EMIL ANTONUCCI



The most intense perception of my childhood, undiminished after fifty years, was that everything of consequence in life is hidden: God, the sources of art, the workings of our bodies and minds, the forces of nature, the heart of another human being. One had, somehow, to live with these mysteries. Even the simplest and humblest of things partook of mystery. God was there, hidden in the world of appearances, but somehow not separate from them.

So, I became, as all artists must, obsessed with appearances, with the very thingness of the world, with looking constantly and carefully at the world, certain that if I made the right visual connections in the constantly shifting patterns of both the world and my own mind, I would *see*. See what? The being of things, I suppose. But I have never been satisfied with the notion of art as a revelation of meaning or as the communication of meanings. I see art as the creation of structures, the creation of worlds that meaning may inhabit, but not define. That's why great works of art last. Whatever the original intentions and meanings invested in them by their creators, they continue to provide structures that can be inhabited by successive generations.

I see the way art works as an analogy for God's presence in the world. People create structures in the mind, in society, that God can inhabit. It is a task that, like the artist's, depends not on theories and explanations, but on the skill with which they are fashioned: life as skill; art as skill; the experience of God as skill. All require unremitting awareness, a kind of constant scanning, just below the level of consciousness, the ordering of myriad small currents of the mind. Without this skill, some inevitable law of spiritual gravity drags us down and away from the reality of God's presence and reduces us to rote definitions of God that have no life.

Our task, as believers, is to create structures of ourselves skillfully enough that they can be inhabitable by God, in the way that art and music can invest a cultivated sensibility. I see prayer as this skill. Prayer is less petition or communication than this daily structuring of our minds to permit God's entrance. I see spirituality not as some force lurking behind appearances, but as the perception and even creation of a pattern in appearances—the figure in the carpet, always present, but unseen until we order our vision.

In a word, I don't think skill is the prerogative only of the artist. As film director Jean Renoir once said: "Art is not a calling, but the way in which one exercises a calling, and also the way in which one performs any human activity. Art is making." All human beings possess high orders of skill, progressively diminished in industrial societies. The individual experience of making something, whether a shoe or a painting, from start to finish, must somehow be regained in a society where most of us are the passive users of the skills of a few others.

Anyone who makes things in the sense I speak of knows that something works through them, waxing and waning without their control, that only a kind of faith and constancy of belief will get them through. This experience of making something forms the grammar of religious experience. Without it, I believe, our notions of God become too mental, not actual enough to inform our daily lives, and too "personal" to enable us to share the experience of God with others.

Whatever God is, God is a totality, a wholeness that connects the world and ourselves, the past with the present and the future, the living and the dead. The great appeal of the visual arts for me is that approximation of the experience of totality, of everything happening everywhere at once. Literature and music must take place in time, but a painting gives you a whole world in the instant you see it. At best art is only an analogy for this sense of God's totality, but it does exercise all the right mental and spiritual muscles. The notion that artists are "divinely" inspired is presumptuous and sentimental. All human beings participate in the continuing creation of the world. The artist's skill is simply the paradigm of the process. This process is a constant one of reconciling the random events of daily life with the spiritual values we maintain, of integrating the contradictions inherent in everyday life. Artistically, it is safe in our time to deal in fragmentation and disassociation. What is difficult and full of risk is to create images and structures of wholeness, integration,

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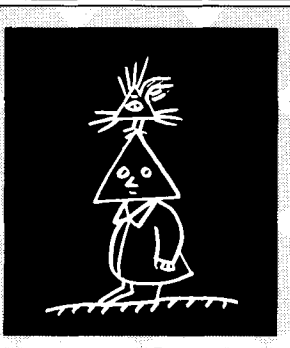
and harmony. I don't think we understand enough about the era we live in to make convincing images of wholeness. Our era is like the cinematic effect of "the dissolve," i.e., two scenes, one fading away, one coming into being, caught at that instant when both images are of equal strength. We who come to consciousness at that instant cannot say which elements of this composite image will fade, which will endure. This ambiguity runs through all our lives. It is the prime characteristic of our art and our religious lives.

It is this fragmentation and ambiguity that make the creation of religious art so difficult. People with the same religious beliefs may still have very different sources for their images and symbols of the world, since these images are largely formed by the dominant culture, which is clearly not religiously motivated. The working artist who is trying to shape his work in the artistic values of the time may face impossible contradictions between high art and popular art, modernity and tradition, the private symbol and the public one. Such contradictions account for the prevalence of religious art that is either "popularly" sentimental or vaguely nostalgic for the art of some "religious" era.

We need to recreate the very definition of religious art. My own sense is that the best we can expect from the believing artist is the patience to wait, to pursue his goals of wholeness in his work in solitude until we, as a society, can find our way to some degree of integration and harmony. I suspect that in some complex and confused way we may even be moving away from the notion of the artist as an exclusive occupation, to a wider participation in the making of the symbolic structures we inhabit. The pressures from all the forgotten ones of the earth, from the cultures excluded from the dominant white Western culture, are inexorable. The development of the interactive computer video, capable of drawing on a data base of all art of the past and mingling these images, opens incredible possibilities of wider participation in the making of art. And as crude as these developments may appear to be at the moment, they offer the hope of escaping the commodification of art and healing the split between high art and mass society.

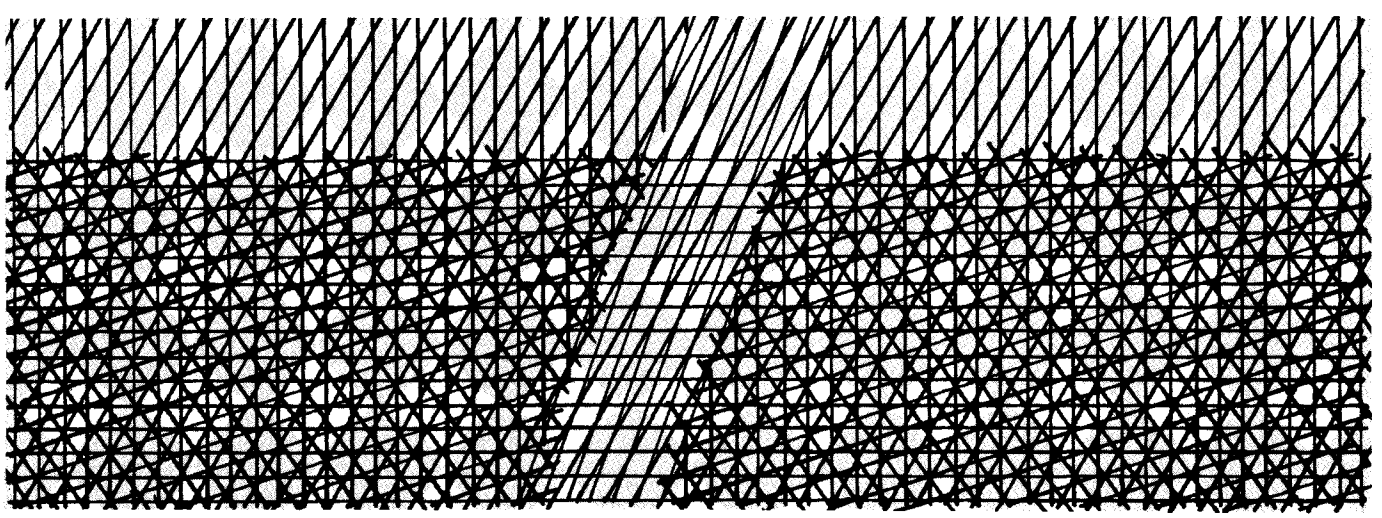


In 1987, *Commonweal* published a series of articles by lay people who described their personal experience of faith in the work place. We received such positive response to the series that we have decided to continue it. We asked each individual: How is your Catholic faith manifest in your daily life and work? How has faith shaped your choices: vocational, financial, ethical; and vice versa? Where do you find spiritual strength and guidance?

Our second contributor to this series is Emil Antonucci, an instructor at Parsons School of Design in New York City. Mr. Antonucci is currently the design consultant to the NYC Charter Revision Commission and the NYC Campaign Finance Board. He redesigned *Commonweal* in 1965 and 1987.

I feel no conflict between artistic solitude and my concern for society. I fell sure that all the hidden forces of the world interconnect as much as the overt ones do, that our task is to create worlds that sustain the mystery of God's presence, not resolve it. Our task is to hone the skills that enable us to live in a world that will always be full of contradiction.

In my early teens, crossing the bridge from Brooklyn to Manhattan over a dark, dank East River one wintry morning, I watched a patch of reflecting, golden light move across the water beneath me. It suddenly struck me that the entire river surface was, at once, both dark *and* radiant, depending on one's angle of vision, but clearly both. I still don't know the "meaning" of that image, but I have never lost the feeling of its power: the reconciliation of contradiction, the embodiment of both appearance and inner reality. God around us, within us—impenetrable darkness/radiant light. □



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NO STICKS, NO ASPIRINS

THE FUTURE OF U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONS

BRUCE RUSSETT

No American should presume to tell Israelis what the solution to their internal and external security problems should be. After spending several months in Israel it is more apparent to me than ever that these problems are immensely complex, and that there is no simple solution. Every possible step carries great risks, and it is an intensely personal decision, to be made by the individuals who will take them, to decide how serious they think the various risks are—and more important, which risks and costs are worth incurring. In particular, no Christian American, not immediately sharing the experience of Jewish history, should presume to say what risks Israelis should run.

Any American does, however, have a right to express an opinion on what United States policy in the Middle East should be, if that policy means actively supporting or opposing the actions of governments in the area. American policy has for the past decade essentially consisted of supporting whatever broad policy has been pursued by the government of Israel. There have been some disagreements on the margin, but even those were basically on matters of what the United States should do rather than what Israel should do. (For example, whether the U.S. should pay large costs to underwrite the Lavi fighter; and whether the U.S. as a sovereign international actor—not Israel—should talk to the PLO.) The U.S. government has not told Israel that it must negotiate with the PLO, or withdraw from the occupied territories, or accept certain international guarantees. Nor, in my opinion, should it do so. But neither should it—figuratively or literally—give Israel a blank check which imposes costs on the United States.

Israelis seem divided (sometimes within their own heads) on whether they hope or fear that Washington will impose some sort of settlement on the Middle East. The reasons for fear are obvious enough; the hope stems from a sense that the Israeli political system itself is so sharply and permanently divided as to be incapable of pursuing any policy—whether tough or conciliatory—other than continuing to muddle along in an increasingly costly and unpromising manner. For the hopers, the U.S. is the *deus ex machina* to save the Israelis from themselves. It is, I think, a misguided and forlorn hope.

BRUCE RUSSETT *is Dean Acheson Professor of Political Science at Yale University and visiting Fulbright scholar at Tel Aviv University.*

Misguided first, because Americans have neither the depth of knowledge nor the personal stake to justify imposing a "solution" on someone else; that would not serve American, or Palestinian, or Israeli interests. Second, because imposed solutions rarely resolve conflicts; at best they drive them underground for a while, and only then if enforced by "sticks" of armed coercion that are inconceivable in this situation.

Forlorn, because the United States government is not capable of imposing even a diplomatic solution. The combination of domestic political pressures and the image of Israel as a strategic asset in the superpower rivalry make it impossible for an American government to require the Israeli government to take any major action to which it is opposed. Both of these underpinnings are eroding somewhat—domestic support for Israel as a result of the *intifada*, PLO diplomacy, and fiascoes like that of "who is a Jew?"; and the image of a strategic asset with the decline of the cold war. Neither of them, however, is likely to decline quickly or sharply enough to produce serious direct pressure on Israel. Nor is it realistic to expect a replay of Jimmy Carter at Camp David. Carter spent many weeks devoting himself exclusively to the Begin-Sadat negotiations in 1978, at great political risk (had the negotiations failed, or had he been seen as having coerced Israel) and with little gain to himself (the temporary upsurge in Carter's public approval ratings did him no good by the 1980 elections). Carter worked in the context of a recent energy crisis traceable directly to the Middle East conflict; oil is now cheap and plentiful again—for a while at least. An American president faces too many competing demands on his attention to want or be able to repeat the Carter experience.

Lord Palmerston's axiom that nation states have no permanent friends or enemies, only interests, is too glib, at least for democracies. Individual citizens of democracies have friends—in this case the personal ties between Americans and Israelis—which rightly give rise to expression in the political area. But those individual interests do have to be weighed against the larger interests of the state. What an American president can and must do is to look clearly at the national balance sheet of costs and gains from continuing the present degree of involvement.

Cash in the form of $3.5 billion a year in government aid to Israel (counting a half-billion in indirect subsidies) and over $2

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billion to Egypt is but one aspect of those costs. In an era of tight federal budgets, holding the line or gradually reducing actual dollar expenditures (with a true reduction in aid after inflation) is eminently defensible. Less obvious costs are those involved in incurring or preventing terrorism, an estrangement from some Arab governments that invites Soviet penetration, and the risk of being drawn into another and more severe oil embargo, or, worst of all, into a Middle East war that escalates into a Soviet-American conflict (possibly a nuclear one).

Against the costs are a vital American interest in Israel's survival, and intangible benefits such as those deriving from U.S.-Israel military and intelligence cooperation. Nor would any of the costs be completely eliminated by a greater distancing of the United States from the Arab-Israeli protagonists. But arguably they all would be reduced. The whole balance sheet needs careful evaluation. Excessive American short-term support of Israeli policy could erode the basis for long-term support.

Some Israelis hope that the mutual pain suffered in the *intifada* will eventually drive both sides to accept a settlement; if so, should the U.S. now be supplying aspirins to relieve the pain? Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's stated policy is never to negotiate with the PLO, never to accept a Palestinian state, and never to trade territory for peace—in effect accepting a long-term reality of rebellion and repression. If the American government decides this policy is in the interest of the United States, then it should support it; if not it should not. In the latter case, withdrawal of some overt and virtually open-ended supports for Israeli policy would not constitute "pressuring" Israel, but merely a changed view of America's own national interest. It would not be an expression of moral judgment on a conflict that defies total judgments of right and wrong. Nor would it be a withdrawal of American ultimate moral responsibility to help underwrite the resolution of a conflict to which the United States has itself contributed.

One appropriate form of help might be assistance in supervising truly free Palestinian elections to a negotiating entity which both Israelis and Arabs would consider a legitimate representative. A stable peace cannot be reached by negotiating with "representatives" who are regarded either as traitorous puppets or as terrorists enforcing a hard line on their own people. Only a Palestinian delegation seen as chosen by people in some control of their own fate can enlist support for any agreement.

The United States may also be able to serve as an honest broker suggesting other instruments that will satisfy some interests of the Palestinians and of the Israelis. Both parties have begun to learn from the *intifada* about the limits to which either can realistically be pushed, and that the status quo is not indefinitely tolerable. As Americans have also learned by observing events, they may have something useful to share.

In the longer run, carrots like aid for permanently resettling refugees inside and outside of Palestine, development assistance to all parties, and perhaps military and political guarantees of an agreement would be in order if requested by those directly involved. But the days of attempted American coercion, or uncritical support, should pass. □

SCREEN

CATCHING FIRE

'RAINBOW,' 'RIGHT,' & 'MS. CRACKER'

Ken Russell never saw a waterfall he didn't like; at least in his films he can't resist its allure as a symbol. For decades, the English director has made wild, lyrical, sometimes lurid movies about sexual freedom, preaching that free love is the road to Utopia. Sporadically moving, frequently absurd, Russell's films treat the past as prelude to the 1960s, his *l'âge d'or*. Few of Russell's "romantic artists" have escaped the director's affectionate but reductionist touch: from *Mahler*, to Tchaikovsky in *The Music Lovers* (1971), to the Byron-Shelley crew in *Gothic* (1987): every bygone creative soul was really a flower child in period costume. D.H. Lawrence provided the best material—first in *Women in Love* (1969) and now a prequel, *The Rainbow*. Noah's arcs, luscious rivers, rocky cascades, a turn-of-the-century marble swimming pool—the movie is all wet, which is exactly what Russell desires.

The Rainbow concerns Ursula Brangwen, a mature heroine in the later *Women in Love*, but here a late adolescent in Midlands England. Her family is a sweet but heavy weight around her dreams. Ursula (Sammi Davis from *Hope and Glory*) is bright and ambitious; her father wants her to help out with four younger siblings, and Mum (Glenda Jackson, Ursula in *Women in Love*) quietly concurs. Rebellious, indomitable Ursula becomes a teacher, endures a Dickensian school, flirts with a soldier, is seduced by a woman, is chased by an artist with odd tastes, meets the soldier again, and, in short, explores life's possibilities among the "other Victorians." Give Lawrence credit for trying to imagine the world of a young woman and at least for being ahead of his time.

The strengths of the film rest on the characterizations; Russell's comparative restraint; his skill at evoking lyrical beauty in the scenery (an important gift when nature is a character). Some of the performances are good, especially Jackson's; she convincingly depicts the suppression Ursula fears. Stealing the show is a relative newcomer, Amanda Donahoe (in Russell's 1988 *Lair of the White Worm*). Svelte, blonde Donahoe has a fine time being naughty with several sexes in a way that seems less immoral than camp. Beware when she tells anyone with an ache, "Let me help, I'm a trained osteopath."

Unfortunately, the lead role is too much for Sammi Davis. She serves as spokesperson for Lawrence and Russell's ideology, and that might be too much for any actress. She is also weakened by the dry mechanical performance of Paul McGann as the soldier. To like this film you have to appreciate the environment Russell creates around the young lovers, not the central story itself. Ursula sinks under Lawrence and Russell's

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lectures about love. Queen Victoria has a lot to answer for in making Ken Russell possible.

Getting It Right does just that. The film is both spunky and sweet, in the best sense of the term. It treats a more difficult subject than *The Rainbow*: the sexual awakening of a thirty-one-year-old man, a hairdresser named Gavin (Jesse Birdsall from *Wish You Were Here*). Gavin still lives at home with his father and mother, eats her terrible food, and avoids other women. Yet director Randall Kleiser and screenwriter Elizabeth Jane Howard (who adapted her own novel) have drawn from this a charming contemporary comedy where improbable happiness breaks out.

Getting It Right skirts clichés to get at reality. Gavin has slight resemblances to contemporary caricatures of a passive, awkward man (e.g., the "geek"), but never fits a category. He is quietly handsome, competent in most areas of life, just extraordinarily reserved in sexual matters—not on principle but from insecurity. Do such men exist? Howard could cite Jane Austen here, "if not, the credit of a wild imagination will be entirely my own." Gavin appeals because he is neither seducer nor loser, neither hunk nor wimp. Birdsall plays the role perfectly.

Naturally, love must enter his life, and when it rains it pours. Gavin is drawn to three women at once—Helena Bonham Carter in the thankless role of spoiled little rich girl; Lynn Redgrave as an artsy London hostess; and his aide at the salon where he works (Jane Horrocks). The affection that evolves will come as no complete surprise, but is still well acted, paced, and edited. Indeed, the film pleases by getting romance quite right.

The plot drags a bit, and two of the women are dispatched abruptly. But the supporting cast helps the film over such rough spots: Peter Cook as owner of the salon, John Gielgud as Carter's father, and Redgrave, who sets new standards for older glamour.

Of greatest interest is Kleiser's cinematography of London, less for its notations of the art world and decadent punks than its quiet grace. *Getting It Right* covers a city which is neither tourist nor trendy—another (perhaps more real) London beyond costumes ancient or modern. Houseboats by Tower Bridge, late June dusks over St. Paul's, the public gardens and private flowerboxes—Kleiser shoots these with poetic affection. *Getting It Right* treats London like a well-loved sofa—lived in and cozy—a London where ordinary people live. It is nice to be reminded of it.

Although set in Mississippi, *Miss Firecracker* has more ham than Virginia. Peopled by the standard eccentrics of time-honored southern gothic traditions, it derives from play and screenplay by Beth Henley, but arrives about ten years too late. Southern gothic comedy requires a bonkers family; squabbling siblings; and a dead older relative and his (and more normally her) malign influence on the present. In *Firecracker*, the wicked ancestor was the repressive "Momma" of a hypocritical sister (Mary Steenbergen) and a loony brother (Tom Robbins, from *Bull Durham*); their younger cousin (Holly Hunter) is the aspiring naif who carries the burden of purging family ghosts.

Hunter is likable; but her dynamic energy (*Broadcast News*) fizzles here in a poor role. She is supposed to be in her early twenties, and fierce as a hurricane to win the small-town "Miss Firecracker" beauty contest. Maybe in theater she could have pulled this off. In film, she has two disadvantages. First, with crow's feet and a mature body, she doesn't look the part. Second, absurd realism is easier to manage on stage, an actor's medium where laying it on thick can make things convincing; on film, it looks like overacting.

Hunter, Steenbergen, Robbins (plus Alfre Woodward, Trey Wilson, and Amy Wright in minor parts) have no choice with this material but to hype it as much as possible and hope that the result seems wild and wacky. Director Thomas Schlamme aims at the same goal, ending with a symbolic, grand fireworks display. Hunter, ever indomitable, climbs an observatory to reach for the stars; the effect is supposed to suggest happy, magic transformation. In truth, every bit of it seems forced.

TOM O'BRIEN

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Mosaics, magicians, & mystery

PAUL BAUMANN

These tomes—two of which are deceptively, nay, sinisterly, thin—each present the literary ideas of an estimable man of letters. Milan Kundera, author most famously of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984) and *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (1979), is a Czech exile living in France, who has a reputation as a brilliant and epoch-making novelist, or as a brilliant yet somewhat inaccessible talent, depending on your literary taste, educational pedigree, and politics. The late Italo Calvino is regarded as an equally coruscating literary magician, an Italian and a "fabulist" best known for *Cosmicomics* (1965), *Invisible Cities* (1972), and *If on a Winter's Night, a Traveler*...(1982).

Kundera and Calvino are, after the European fashion, philosophical novelists though Kundera hems and haws about this. Czeslaw Milosz, the Polish poet, essayist, and Nobel Prize winner, who has lived in the United States since 1960, shares the European perspective of Calvino and Kundera, but cannot easily be accommodated to their aesthetics. Thank God.

The tradition Kundera and Calvino emerge from is bookish, cosmopolitan, formalist, but entertaining in its own exacting way. These are difficult and paradoxical writers who deprecate the fiction of psychological realism, plead the "opacity" of reality, and call upon literature to approach its subject obliquely. *Six Memos*, which Calvino wrote for Harvard's Charles Eliot Norton lectures shortly before his death in 1985, and Kundera's *The Art of the Novel*, set forth rigorous meditations on the nature and purpose of literature and the conundrums of epistemology. We get little of the authors in flesh and blood.

Books Discussed in this Column

Conversations with Czeslaw Milosz, *Ewa Czarnecka and Aleksander Fiut, translated by Richard Lourie, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987, $27.95, 332 pp.*

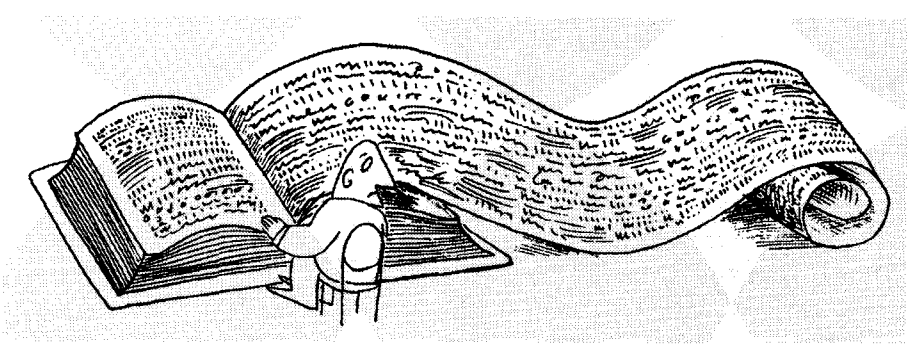
The Art of the Novel, *Milan Kundera, translated by Linda Asher, Grove Press, 1988, $16.95, 165 pp.*

Six Memos for the Next Millennium, *Italo Calvino, translated by Patrick Creagh, Harvard University Press, 1988, $12.95, 124 pp.*

As critics or theorists both novelists demonstrate a weakness for big ideas: British critic John Bayley finds Kundera prone "to run a good idea into the ground." But Kundera's Delphic speculations can seem pedestrian next to Calvino's labyrinthian schematics. This polymath posits the "world as a system of systems, where each system conditions the others and is conditioned by them" and he envisions the postmodern novel as a "vast net" linking "the various branches of knowledge, the various 'codes,' into a manifold and multifaceted vision of the world."

Calvino, as he has written elsewhere, is not interested in introspective or psychological fiction, but rather in the "mosaic in which man is set." That mosaic is best illuminated, for this storyteller, in a literature steeped in science, philosophy, and logic, avenues of imaginative investigation just as poetically rewarding as the subjects of more traditional novels. Indeed, Calvino issues a call for rigorous literary forms—"geometric compositions" modeled on the cosmologies of modern science, specifically the science of entropy, where despite the irreversible collapse of a system, areas of order and form can take shape, if only temporarily. Poetry is both the daughter and enemy of chance. In the last resort, however, "chance will win the battle."

Sound sterile and dry as classroom chalk? I think so. After all, the novel's principal claim to our attention is its ability to convincingly re-present the mysterious, even irrational dimension of life. More than for knowledge, we turn to fiction for experience. To describe a fiction as "calculated" is usually a pejorative. When a writer's scheming is fiendishly clever we indulge it—if it is sufficiently playful. But a chilling, somewhat inhuman quality is present in such literary exercises. As John Updike has written in expressing reservations about Calvino's *The Castle of Crossed Destinies:* "The combinations that the human mind invents are relatively facile and



PAUL BAUMANN *experiences the trap of existence as a staff writer and movie critic for* The Day *in New London, Connecticut.*

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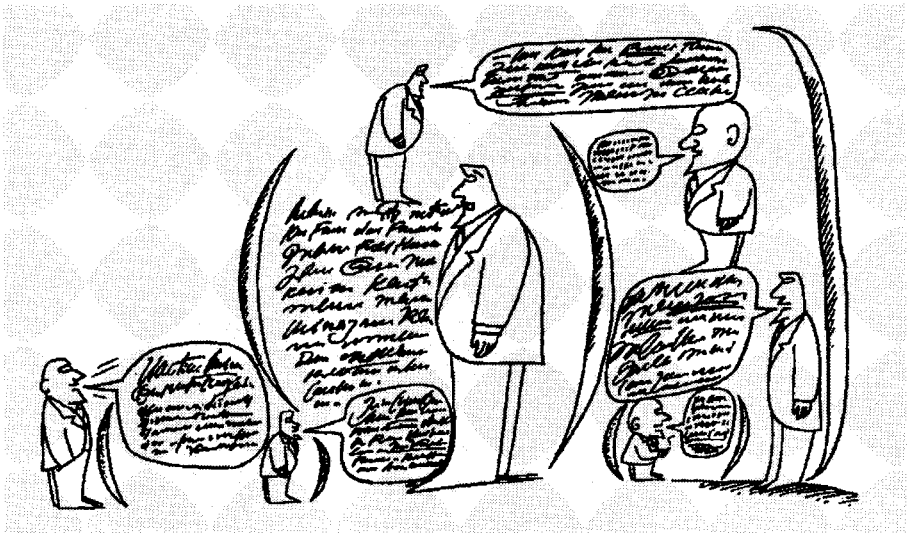
unmagical compared to reality's dovetailed richness....Narrative and metaphysics alike become flimsy and frivolous if they venture too far from the home base of all humanism—the single, simple human life that we all more or less lead, with its crude elementals of nurture and appetite, love and competition, the sunshine of well-being and the inevitable night of death. We each live this tale. Fiction has no reason to be embarrassed about telling the same story again and again, since we all, with infinite variations, experience the same story."

But Calvino and Kundera venture far to avoid that kind of embarrassment. The worst to be said about their various essays and edited conversations is that if you were first to come to either novelist by way of these reflections it is unlikely you would subsequently pick up their fiction. A high price to pay, since both are storytellers first and theorists second. To be sure, there's plenty of dazzle in both these books (Calvino's excursus on the myth of Perseus is a bit of genius), and a wealth of literary perception and inventive scholarship. Finally, however, the un-professored reader looking for some manageable purchase against the babbling tower of the postmodern novel—with its unwelcoming authorial self-consciousness and wearying explorations of technique—is likely to find these apologias mannered and of dubious efficacy.

Milosz is a somewhat different case. Part of his comparative agreeableness is due to the nature of the book. *Conversations with Czeslaw Milosz*, although largely devoted to the exegesis of specific, often arcane texts, ranges over a wide variety of topics, from family history to politics to religion. Milosz maintains a European reserve, but a sense of his passion, intellectual honesty, and lived life comes through. He's a man, and a thinker, of piquant contradictions. In his engaging dialectical fashion he moves back and forth among literature, his other ultimate concerns, and the concrete experience of life in the twentieth century. He has been a victim of both Nazism and Stalinism.



Each of these writers is a metaphysician in his own idiosyncratic way: Milosz, for the most part the traditional Thomist, with a Catholic sense of a hierarchy of values and a historical ontology; Kundera, the lambent phenomenologist and jokester, laughing in his dark Central European way (Kafka is one of his heroes) as he faces the gallows; Calvino, the craft-conscious aesthete, inspired to fashion transcendent beauty on the brink of the void.

Interestingly, each traces the source of his imaginative work to some suprahuman dimension. Milosz considers himself a "medium," but a "mistrustful" one. Calvino employs a neo-Platonic model, where imagination participates in the "truth of the world," and confesses he has always "sought out in the imagination a means to attain a knowledge that is outside the individual, outside the subjective." Kundera remarks that great novels are "always more intelligent than their authors" and that every "true novelist listens for that suprapersonal wisdom...."

A common description of our present intellectual, literary, and existential dilemma is also offered. These writers differ, however, in their analysis of the problem and in where they locate reason for hope or faith. Kundera, who insists that oppression in private and political life operates on the same metaphysical level, is compelling as he analyzes the origin of this cultural problem. "In the seventeenth century, God becomes *'Deus absconditus'* and man the ground of all things," he writes. As God gradually departed, "the single divine Truth decomposed into myriad relative truths parceled out by men." Philosophy and science, with their impersonal operations, "forget about man's being." As Kundera sees it, the novel must resist this "forgetting of being."

In presenting the history of the novel, which he calls the "image and model" of the Modern Era, Kundera champions the genre as the meditative tool, the supreme "ironic art," uniquely qualified to explore the questions of contemporary existence. Like the age itself, the postmodern novel is syncretistic. It brings together, in a "polyphonic" and multilayered manner, a variety of imaginative forms, such as fantasy, autobiography, narrative, ironic essay, and history. Kundera's ambition as a novelist is "the union of a frivolous form and a serious subject (which) lays bare our dramas (those that occur in our beds as well as those we play out on the great stage of history) in all their terrible insignificance."

Kundera shares Calvino's extravagant veneration of literature as the possible vehicle for a great modern synthesis. But he is not as sanguine as the Italian experimentalist about the cultural ascendancy of scientific rationalism. Typically, he extols "the ambiguity of the epoch, which is decline and progress at the same time." Like Milosz, Kundera is enough a student of history and culture to be haunted by a sense of doom at the loss of ontological certainty. Cartesian rationality, he argues, while freeing man to pursue knowledge, also undermined every accepted value. But once having toppled tradition, reason

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had no framework within which its own value could be verified and assured. Consequently, irrationality, the mere force of will, has triumphed. That is the modern predicament, and it finds its most egregious expression in totalitarianism, although the "nonthought of received ideas" also curses the West.

Calvino is not blind to these dangers, but he applauds most loudly the emergence of human consciousness from the shackles of "anthropocentric parochialism." If Milosz has written elsewhere of how "I need a Thou to address, I cannot speak to clouds and stones" (*Visions from San Francisco Bay*), Calvino's aesthetic convictions, his acceptance of fluidity and "the vortex of multiplicity," lead him to call for a literature that does in fact "give speech to that which has no language, to the bird...to the tree...to stone, to cement, to plastic." Where Milosz bemoans the loss of the sacred, Calvino embraces it, seeking meaning only in the crystalline imaginative object, "alive as an organism." Relativism and the uncertainty of all things is a liberation. Even the self floats free.

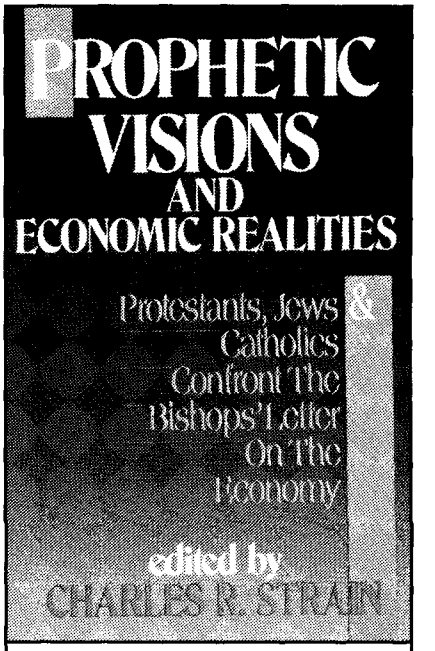
"Who are we, who is each one of us, if not a combinatoria of experiences, information, books we have read, things imagined?" Calvino writes. "Each life is an encyclopedia, a library, an inventory of objects, a series of styles, and everything can be constantly shuffled and reordered in every way conceivable." Perhaps this is poetical genius, but it is not far from the hallucinations vulgarly called mad. Kundera shares this promiscuous phenomenalism. "Where does the self begin and end? You see: not wonder at the immeasurable infinity of the soul; rather, wonder at the uncertain nature of the self and of its identity."

Certainly there is a gnostic flavor to Kundera's and Calvino's thinking. They generally disavow the life of the body and of the earth, while tirelessly insisting we ascend to some higher plane of existence by virtue of a special, essentially mystical knowledge. In the end it is hard to suppress the suspicion that the search for poetic detachment and purity is neither new nor especially fruitful.

Milosz is no less subtle or knowledgeable than they about the mystery of the self or the potentialities of existence. Refreshingly, however, he does not see literature as redemption or as an end in itself. "Art is a minor affair compared with the complexity and richness of the visible world," he says, knowing how heretical such a sentiment sounds in certain quarters.

Nor does Milosz welcome the embrace of either immutable natural law or a universe of randomness and chance. "Cosmos as mathematical necessity is mostly pain for living creatures," he comments. Instead, he insists on a fixed, and in his case religious, point of reference and value if the human enterprise, including the imaginative enterprise, is to go forward. "Man lives in time and in some way has to build those eternal or lasting values out of time. Time is given for his use. But he should not allow himself to be completely carried away by time, because then he will be lost in relativism and utter fluidity and be smashed to bits." From this, Milosz goes on to speak eloquently of "our hope" lying in a heightened sense of history, a rootedness in time that is biblical and incarnational. "The point is to accept our animal nature while at the same time not allowing ourselves to be diminished."

Too often the postmodernist sees history only as a nightmare. Milosz reminds us that it is also an indispensable tool. Only after "passing through the purgatory of historical thought" can we seek "the ontological dimension." He distrusts the relativistic cosmology manifest in so much contemporary writing. Writers infatuated by such "self-enclosed" systems are engaged in a pursuit as artificial as that of dogs chasing a mechanical rabbit, he warns. Although he acknowledges, very much in the spirit of Kundera and Calvino, the difficulty of creating "significant forms," he comes down on the side of books that relate "directly to life," not principally to other books. We can too easily get hung up on definitions here, but the direction Milosz wants to go is clear. A self-conscious obsession with the "means of expression" is a dead end. We must be returned to the natural world, he says. And that is exactly where I now propose to take my various selves. □



Using the bishops' letter on the economy as a basis for discussion, the sixteen contributors to this book began a year-long series of meetings to discuss the role religion plays and should play in determining economic policies. The participants, drawn from a variety of academic disciplines, divided into teams representing their religious traditions — evangelical Protestant, Jewish, mainline Protestant, and Roman Catholic. Each group, with its own balance of unity and diversity, brought a unique perspective to its reflections on the economic order, thereby inviting response from others within and outside its own tradition.

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Can Jews & Arabs embrace 'shalom'?

THE WRATH OF JONAH
The Crisis of Religious Nationalism in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
Rosemary Radford Ruether and Herman J. Ruether
Harper & Row, $19.95, 269 pp.

Gregory Baum

Trying to come to grips with the Holocaust, Christian scholars have uncovered the anti-Jewish rhetoric contained, almost from the beginning, in Christian religious literature. In a spirit of grief and repentance Christian theologians, supported by their churches, have sought to free the Christian message from anti-Jewish elements. In reaching out to Jews in dialogue and friendship, Christians—especially in North America—have tended to become uncritical supporters of the state of Israel. The more deeply Christian theologians were involved in opening the church to the appreciation of Jewish religion, the more reluctant they have been to criticize the human rights violations committed by Israel. They also tended to be silent about the human rights of Palestinians about which often they felt guilty.

In this daring and important book, Rosemary Ruether and Herman Ruether take the bull by the horns. Their study of the Middle East conflict analyzes its complex history and uncovers the ideological distortions in order to facilitate a just peace between Israelis and Palestinians. The critical analysis of Zionist ideology makes this a bold book, one that will create controversy. But Rosemary Ruether's solidarity with the Jews and her courageous struggle against the theological roots of anti-Semitism is beyond question. Her *Faith and Fratricide*, published in 1974, has remained an influential book for longer than a decade. What is new here is that her and her husband's solidarity is now extended to the Palestinian people.

To clarify the historical background, *The Wrath of Jonah*, by way of introduction, offers a summary of what peoplehood, covenant, and land mean in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The major sections of the book deal more precisely with the origin and development of Zionism, the emergence of Palestinian nationalism, the present situation of Palestinians in the Jewish state and the occupied territories, and the reactions of Christians to Judaism, Zionism, and the Holocaust. The book concludes with proposals for peace.

Zionism, as defined in the book, is the theory that the Jews constitute a nation in the political sense and, as such, have the right, divinely conferred, to the Holy Land. The authors contrast this theory with the self-understanding of the Jews through the long period of history when they saw themselves as a religious community. Classical Judaism defined Jewish identity through the dynamic interplay of people, Torah, and land. The Jews were a people, widely dispersed, sent to give witness to God and God's ethical message. At the same time the Jews retained a special relation to the land, a relation that was full of promise and ethical meaning. Even when Jews became secular, they tended to preserve their heritage, solidarity with their people, commitment to the ethical message, and attachment to their biblical origins.

The theory that the Jews were a nation in the political sense and should live as a nation in the Holy Land was promoted by several movements, religious and secular, in part as a response to, and in part as a reflection of nineteenth-century European nationalism. The new political Zionism picked up and transformed earlier religious aspirations. Prior to World War II a majority of Jews rejected the Zionist theory, yet as a response to the Holocaust, a majority became sympathetic to the Zionist cause.

The Zionist movement was made up of many different currents. It also had a shadow side, one that is not well known. The book examines the current led by Ze'ev Jabotinsky, sometimes called "Revisionist Zionism," which copied the worst aspects of European nationalism: glorification of power and violation of justice. While this movement was opposed by mainstream Zionism, it is impossible to understand the present policies of the Israeli government without taking this ultranationalist heritage into account. The authors here base themselves on Joseph Scheerman's *The Jabotinsky Story* and Lenni Brenner's *The Iron Wall: Zionist Revisionism from Jabotinsky to Shamir*.

The Ruethers argue that Zionist theory prevents the Israeli government and a great number of Jews in Israel and in other parts of the world from recognizing that the Palestinians are a people with the right

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to self-determination, and not just groups of Arabs that happen to live in these territories. The Zionist theory, the book argues, prompts the Israeli government to make claims in regard to the land that leave no room for another people. While the evolution of Palestinian nationalism has arrived at a point where recognition, dialogue, and cooperation have become real possibilities, the corresponding evolution of the Israeli self-understanding has not yet fully matured.

At the same time, the book tries to show that Zionist theory is in fact crumbling among growing numbers of Jews in Israel and elsewhere. There have, of course, always been Orthodox Jews who rejected Zionism as a political messianism at odds with Scripture. Today secular Israelis increasingly see themselves as a small, Middle Eastern nation that wants peace. Many of them have abandoned the theory that the Jews are a nation in the political sense and ought to be established in the Holy Land. Israelis tend to think of *themselves* as a nation. Nor do these Israelis look upon their nation as the ideal location for the entire Jewish people. Israel is no longer the safe haven, but a military society: it has to wrestle with its own structures of inequality and economic dependencies, including billions of dollars in yearly American aid. Secular Israelis are increasingly embarrassed by the public claim that God gave this land to them. Despite the effort of political leaders, Zionist theory is giving way to a more modest, more realistic Israeli national self-understanding. If this trend wins out, negotiations between the two nations, Palestinian and Israeli, become possible and may arrive at a constructive solution.

Even in the United States, the book argues, Jews are slowly abandoning the Zionist theory. They remain deeply concerned about Israel and want to do everything to help, but they think of themselves as Americans; they do not feel that they ought to live in Israel or that staying in America is an act of cowardice. The two authors point to a new cultural and religious vitality among American Jews, who—while not neglecting Israel—are turning again to the traditional Jewish themes of social justice and, for some, religious fidelity.

The chapter entitled "The Contradictions of the Jewish State" is likely to provoke some controversy. Relying on recent, critical historical studies published in Israel, the chapter unmasks some of the glorious myths associated with the foundation of Israel and its increasing power. The chapter also offers a detailed analysis of the marginalization of Palestinians in Israel, and of the oppression inflicted by the Israeli government on the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. This makes very unpleasant reading. Since the authors rely on recent studies highly debated in Israel and on records assembled by various Middle Eastern research institutes, some of the "facts" may turn out to be unreliable. But if this should happen, it will not invalidate the thrust of the chapter. The marginalization of a people and the military occupation of a territory generate a multitude of laws, rules, customs, and practices that humiliate the human beings thus affected and at the same time damage the humanity of the dominator.

It is possible to read this book by concentrating on the passages critical of Israel and critical of theories to which many Jews are deeply attached, and then come to the conclusion that the authors are partial to the Palestinians and hostile to the Jews. But this would be an incorrect interpretation of the book. The chapter on the evolution of Palestinian nationalism acknowledges the crimes against humanity committed by some Palestinian groups and is strongly critical of the Arab states, the colonial powers, and some Palestinian leaders for their roles in perpetuating the conflict. More important, the book as a whole follows the methodology Rosemary Ruether has brilliantly applied in her previous writings. To clarify, heal, and reconcile the human situation—her aim has always been to promote the biblical *shalom*—she analyzes the pathological elements hidden in the different ideologies, trusting that once these elements are brought to light, they can be overcome by the creativity at the heart of every great religious tradition. In this sense *The Wrath of Jonah* is a hopeful book. It envisages the reconciliation of the two Middle Eastern nations, Israel and Palestine, and a renewed flowering of Jewish religion. □

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GRÜNEWALD'S MASTERPIECE

THE DEVIL AT ISENHEIM
Reflections of Popular Belief in Grünewald's Altarpiece
Ruth Mellinkoff
University of California, $29.95, 109 pp.

Lawrence S. Cunningham

The great polyptych painted by Mathias Grünewald between 1512 and 1516 is one of the few artistic works of Western culture that can be called a masterpiece in the fullest sense of the term. Commissioned by the Athonite hospital in the German city of Isenheim (the work is now in the museum at Colmar), its central panel with the overpowering crucified Christ sums up that intense Christocentric piety so characteristic of the late Middle Ages. One cannot look at the weight of Christ bending down the crossbar of the crucifix without thinking of the vivid meditations on the Passion that run from the contemporary *Devotio Moderna* and the fourteenth-century Rhineland mystics (Tauler and Suso) back to the ecstatic experiences of Francis of Assisi on Mount LaVerna.

Its "surplus of meaning"—which is what a masterpiece provides—looks forward as well. The painting not only summarizes the late-medieval past, but anticipated the intense piety of a Martin Luther with its strong gaze on the significance of the cross. Not surprisingly, Karl Barth kept a reproduction of it in his study; the German expressionist painter, Emil Nolde, in the early part of this century, painted a slashing copy of it with great swoops of vivid colors. Even Picasso, not given to many spiritual flights, made a series of ink studies of the Grünewald crucifixion which would get echoed in some aspects of his great work, *Guernica*, at the end of the 1930s.

The University of California Press has recently begun a "Discovery Series" on the history of art which, according to its brochure description, will consist of lavishly illustrated books with roughly one hundred pages of text focusing on some particularity in the field of art history. The first volume in that series is *The Devil at Isenheim*. It is a handsome volume, with beautiful photographs of the entire polyptych and an introductory essay on the work as a whole.

Grünewald's alterpiece is a complex one. The panels can be opened or shut in three different ways to provide three quite different narrative scenes. The precise relationship of all of the scenes is the subject of much scholarly discussion as is the iconography of the particular figures. The full name of the painter was unknown until this century. Grünewald (unlike his German compatriot, Dürer) had not been touched by the Renaissance tradition coming from Italy. He made no attempt to refine the science of perspective nor did he evince an interest in the anatomical and/or spatial rigor of, say, a Leonardo or a Raphael. His art was firmly in the transalpine tradition of ecstatic mysticism; the visionary writings of St. Brigid of Sweden may have served as a possible literary source for his work.

It is so easy to fix the crucifixion panel in one's memory with its stark figures of John the Baptist pointing to the cross, that the other scenes on the altarpiece can easily be forgotten. Yet there are fourteen other scenes plus a "shrine" of carved figures visible to the viewer when the altarpiece is in its so-called "third position."

In "second position" there is a central panel of the Nativity of Christ with an angelic concert, a very complex scene filled with curious references, ambiguous symbols, and a complicated composition. The central panel is flanked on the left by a depiction of the Annunciation, on the right by the famous Resurrection, with a deposition of Christ on the predella below.

At the head of Mellinkoff's volume is a series of detailed studies of some aspects of the scene of Christ's nativity and the angelic chorus. She "unpacks" the polysymbolic significance of Lucifer and his angels, who are at the rear of the angelic concert, showing how the demonic apparel of peacock feathers had a long history in popular art, with its twin allusion about the pride of Lucifer and proverbial pride of the peacock. In Grünewald's painting there is a reversal of the older Christian symbol of the peacock as a symbol of immortality (as old as catacomb art) to become a pictorial representation of demonic rebellion.

Far more fascinating (and, from the perspective of history, chastening) is the juxtaposition of an infant's bathtub and a small chamber pot at the foot of the Virgin's bed. Mellinkoff sees that Grünewald links the appurtenances of Christ's birth with his subsequent Passion: the swaddling clothes with the seamless garment; the bands with his later fetters; his natal bath with the role of baptism, etc. And the chamber pot? The stylized Hebrew letters give us an important clue. The chamber pot, symbolic of uncleanness, represents *Synagoga*, the now surpassed Jewish covenant replaced by the New Covenant in baptism (the bathtub). That it should be

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a chamber pot reflects the popular scatological anti-Semitism of late-medieval life in Germany.

This book demonstrates, at a very focused level, some truths about religious iconography demonstrated in this century by pioneering scholars like Irwin Panofsky and Meyer Shapiro. In the North, especially, the artists of the Renaissance filled their paintings with symbolic details, each of which had its own set of compressed meanings, with the totality standing for a coherent theme. In this particular panel from the Isenheim altarpiece, one can read from left to right the story of demonic deception to redemption while, as Mellinkoff notes, the female figure of *Ecclesia* observes all, ready to take her place as the continuance of the sacred action being depicted before us.

The Devil at Isenheim treats only one panel of many but, in that somewhat narrow concentration, it gives us an entry into the complex world of late-medieval piety and prejudice, religious passion and spiritual convictions.

Grünewald's world is not ours and little of his complex iconography speaks to us today no matter how moved we are by his rendering of the crucifixion or his sunburst vision of the Resurrection. Be that as it may, studies like this show us in compelling detail that theology and theological formulations are not confined to the bloodless tomes of the schools. Theology can also be a tightly compressed visual web of emotions, images, remembrances, allusions, and sentiments, including those that are not always pure or even praiseworthy. □

TO MAKE THE WOUNDED WHOLE

BALM IN GILEAD
Journey of a Healer
Sara Lawrence Lightfoot
Addison Wesley, $18.95, 322 pp.

Jane Redmont

We read biographies and autobiographies looking for ourselves. Even when we embark on them as safe journeys into a foreign land, intimate views into others' souls, they pull us back to our own history. *Balm in Gilead* is the story of Margaret Morgan Lawrence, a black child psychiatrist now in her early seventies. It is also a family history, a love story, and a reflection on culture, trauma, healing, and social change.

Sara Lawrence Lightfoot's book about her mother pulls the reader into the deep waters of self and family. It also leads to an examination of American society, of racism North and South, of the healer's vocation in our country, in this century. Lightfoot, a professor at Harvard's Graduate School of Education and MacArthur Prize recipient, spins a dense and intricate account. *Balm in Gilead* is the fruit of an extended conversation between mother and daughter, psychiatrist and sociologist, and this dialogue is woven into the narrative.

Margaret Cornelia Morgan, born in New York City and raised in Vicksburg, Mississippi in a solidly middle-class black family, was the second child of an Episcopal priest and a schoolteacher. The family's first and only son, nicknamed "Candy Man" because of his fair skin and blond hair, died at eleven months, a year before his sister's birth. His memory haunted the family forever. Margaret, dark-skinned like her father, experienced early the hierarchy of skin color "so central to black folks' valuing of one another and the subject of jokes that mask deep pain." She determined at the age of nine or ten "to be a doctor in order to save a child like my brother from death."

Margaret Morgan spent her high school years in New York, living with her aunts and grandmother in Harlem. The women in her mother's family were a powerful force, strongly allied with each other in a "psychic fortress" bitterly exclusive of men. Morgan attended Cornell University, where she was the only black undergraduate. While her classmates lived in the easy community of the college dormitories, she earned her living as a maid, waiting on table and eating separately in her employer's kitchen.

Certain that her exemplary academic career would open the school's doors for her, Morgan applied to Cornell Medical School. Her dream and her confidence were shaken when the dean informed her that her application had been turned down: "Twenty-five years ago there was a Negro man admitted to Cornell Medical School and it didn't work out....He got tuberculosis." Holding fast to her hope, Margaret Morgan applied and was admitted to Columbia Medical School.

In the summers of her college years, Morgan developed a strong relationship with Charles Lawrence, a sociologist and social activist from Utica, Mississippi; they were married at the end of her second year of medical school. Lightfoot gives an earthy, intimate account of her parent's courtship and marriage, complete with bits of letters, recipes for low-cost meals, and stories of buying furniture, juggling schedules, and caring for young children. In the lives of high-minded idealists, there are still dishes to wash and trains to catch—and daily domesticity has its own heroism.

Balm in Gilead paints a portrait of the black middle-class, of highly educated families committed to working for the whole of the black community. Both privileged and scarred, the lives of black professionals have too often been absent from American literature. The biography of Margaret Morgan Lawrence helps to fill the gap.

The title of the book's most painful chapter, "My People's Wound," is taken from the prophet Jeremiah: "I am wounded at the sight of my people's wound...Is there no balm in Gilead, no physician there?" (Jer. 8:12-22). Lightfoot, in her title, answers in the words of the Negro spiritual: "There is a balm in Gilead/to make the wounded whole." The spiritual takes a text of sorrow and turns it into solace. So too Lawrence remembered her

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pain, but drew on her strength. Her vocation as a healer is rooted not only in trauma, but in the familial, religious, and cultural traditions that shaped her spirit.

Even in the antireligious culture of classical psychoanalytic training during the forties and fifties, Margaret Morgan Lawrence held fast to her religious roots, continuing, as she refined her clinical skills, to "be in touch with the Spirit." She chose not to pit one culture against the other, but remained quietly bilingual.

Lawrence's ability to make connections has been the key to her power as a healer. During her internship at Harlem Hospital, she realized that "in order to be a good doctor ... she needed to understand more about the connections among history, culture, and disease; between public policy and medical practice; between physical disorder and psychosocial forces; and between poverty and vulnerability to illness.... She saw the corrosive effects of poverty and racism, and recognized that to be a doctor in Harlem meant fighting against the oppressive conditions of her patients' lives."

Lawrence could have split her religious self from her psychoanalytic self, dissociated her professional success from the life of her community, treated illness as a purely individual phenomenon, followed the family patterns of bitter relationships between the sexes, been defeated by the assaults of racism on her body and soul. Instead, she emerged as an integrated self delighting in creation and concerned with mending the world. Her story challenges us to acknowledge our own wounds, triumph, and cultural strengths. *Balm in Gilead* is a celebration, a strong and healing book, a book for all of us. □

THE PROMISE BEYOND SELF-INTEREST

PASSIONS WITHIN REASON
The Strategic Role of the Emotions
Robert H. Frank
W.W. Norton, $19.95, 304 pp.

John Brandl

The most elegantly developed and successfully predictive theories in the social sciences rest on the assumption that people act out of self-interest. Across broad reaches of the academy it is axiomatic that rational actors look out for themselves. That, of course, is disconcerting to those who are at once impressed with the growing usefulness of social science and convinced that much of what is distinctive and noble about humans cannot be encompassed by the notion of economic man.

Robert Frank, a professor of economics at Cornell, is cognizant and appreciative of the accomplishments of his discipline but determined to civilize the dismal science. He is intent on demonstrating that recognizing the influence on our actions of what he calls "emotions" broadens the explanatory power of economics as well as of psychology. He wants to do this without rejecting mainstream social science. Frank's approach is to show that when people find themselves in certain kinds of situations common in everyday life, self-interested behavior is less satisfying in the long run than are actions driven by other human emotions. Specifically, he describes what he calls "commitment problems"—cases where it seems to be in one's interest to break a commitment. Partners in business or marriage or friendship or acquaintanceship agree to a cooperative arrangement, but each party has opportunities to cheat on the other and to benefit thereby. If neither reneges on the agreement both are better off, but each knows that holding to the commitment invites one's own suffering if the partner breaks the promise.

Theories that understand rational behavior as the pursuit of self-interest conclude and predict that the rational course of action is to cheat. And we cheat right and left. But the Achilles' heel of self-interest theories is the honest businessman, the faithful spouse, the generous neighbor, the valiant soldier, the good Samaritan. For years social scientists have patched together explanations for why welshing on agreements is not universal. (One such imaginative attempt that Frank mentions is the case of the hostage who, desperate to be released, promises not to divulge her captor's identity, and even gives him compromising information on herself so that if he were to free her she would be restrained from identifying him. In explaining relationships involving recurring interactions, some social scientists theorize that partners, out of self-interest, resort to tit-for-tat responses until each learns that cooperation is more beneficial than is cheating.) Frank catalogues these attempts by social scientists to square their assumptions concerning self-interested motivation with why so many people keep their promises. He concludes that the attempts are inadequate—farfetched, as with the hostage example, or requiring either repeated interactions with the partner or biological loyalty to kin. Theories of self-interest simply don't explain why so many promises are kept in this world.

Frank thinks of such emotions as empathy, anger, desire for vengeance, guilt, and love as commitment devices, constraints that keep us to our word. So bound, we remain loyal to friends through thick and thin. There is also the matter of deterring

"To a life well-spent!"

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aggressors. (Persons contemplating wronging us recognize that we would avenge a wrong even if it were very costly for us to do so.) We retain the benefits of lasting friendship and thwart potential attacks because, motivated by love or empathy or justice or vengeance, we are prepared to go beyond what self-interest would dictate. And sometimes in the end, even in terms of self-interest alone, we are better off.

Frank wants us to be more altruistic but he also is intent on convincing his fellow social scientists that embellishing self-interest theory with systematic consideration of the role of the emotions will permit explanation and prediction of more of human behavior. In the past that suggestion has been all but ignored by economists. Their out has been to say that self-interestedness need not be selfishness. Whatever one desires qualifies as self-interest—Hitler and Mother Teresa just have different preferences. That won't do, for the most celebrated and influential hypotheses of the economic discipline emerge from the assumption that firms maximize profits and consumers are narrowly self-concerned.

The so-called "free-rider" problem is illustrative. A lighthouse, army, zoo, police force, public radio station, church or municipal band yields what economists call a public good. These have the quality that when they are used by one person they remain available to all without diminution. Standard economics predicts flatly that people will not come forward to pay for such services; rather they will wait and let George do it, then take a free ride. Of course some of those services must be provided by government (which can then require payment in the form of taxes). But some public goods are produced privately and generously. Furthermore, in over a thousand experiments people have been confronted with a version of this problem and "the only group for which the strong free-rider hypothesis receives even minimal support...turns out to be a group of economics graduate students." Most other people want to do their part.

Similarly, although today some economists seek to explain not only markets but all manner of human interaction—from bureaucracy to marriage—as commercial transactions, empirical study finds that "exchange-orientation [is] significantly negatively correlated with marital satisfaction for both men and women." Mirabile dictu: Love in marriage is more binding and more satisfying than is calculation of the costs and benefits of a spouse.

Lessons for the design of many public and private institutions can be drawn from Frank's book. For example, attempts to induce efficiency in government by introducing incentives based on the assumption of self-interested behavior are in vogue today (such things as resorting to competitive private suppliers, attaching a price to public services, taxing polluters, making welfare less remunerative than work, etc.). Still, emotional attachments to others continue to play a role in all the organizations within which we work out our lives. Presuming that every social interaction is solely a material exchange erodes productive and supportive loyalties. Thus incentive pay can result in destructive mutual suspicion among workers. While acknowledging the strength of self-interest, government

(Continued on page 349)

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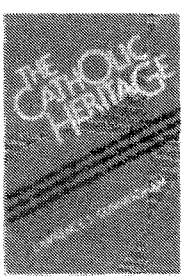

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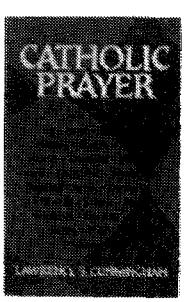

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Joan Rohr Myers
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So much is mine on these blue dinner plates!
Perfect flat circles I smooth with my hands
and try not to smudge, they are the shadows
I finally hold, the deep pitch of dark places
I can bring to the surface
and pass under light. Again and again

they come from the cupboard
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Deborah Pierce
In Aroostook

Seen as it first is, through the dark frames
of trees which shelter the unheated camps,
it's a grand sight, the sun's reflection
down at the lake's east end fine mornings,
the thousands of platinum fragments floating
securely, without a suggestion
they'll vanish as soon as the sun leaves — blazing
like feathers of a home-grown Icarus
who, weary of rain and sweaters
and swimming in the cold and staying inside
and never once getting his fill of the sun,
naturally might, with his brand-new wings,
have eagerly mounted up over the lake,
watching it shrink among its trees
to become just another blue dot in the forest,
before he plummeted out of his future
into the welcoming water.

Judith Root
Good Friday

Barranca del Cobre

Intense as a yolk, a pupil,
any true center, the full moon
stares down the canyon walls,
then turns on mesquite blossoms
that stud the water's surface.

Nothing is what it seems. Deep
in the day of the moon, the garden
simmers with resentment. Vines
coil, ready to strike corn shadows,
broccoli, armored heads of lettuce.

Black holes, tomatoes by day,
climb cactus spines, a ladder
to the stars. At their feet,
small animals rustle, the wind
in their teeth. Betrayed

by this brightness, roosters
crow, dogs howl and birds call
the names of the dead. I dream
earth's plates shift beneath
this rocky ground, pull me

toward a reed flute's whine,
a drum that beats the moon,
the Sierra Tarahumaras rising
in the morning light.

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(Continued from page 347)
would do well to carry out its work through public and private institutions designed to nurture and depend upon our loftier sentiments.

One can find fault with this book: Frank demonstrates the importance of "emotions" but never either defines them or even presents us with a complete list. Nor do we know whether he believes we choose or are pawns of our sentiments. Still, this is an important work. Frank's intellectually fruitful and socially hopeful central argument prevails. As our emotional commitments are incorporated into the social sciences not only will the explanatory power of academic disciplines grow, but we might become a more decent people. □

REVIEWERS

GREGORY BAUM *is professor of religious studies at McGill University in Canada.*

LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM *teaches theology at the University of Notre Dame.*

JANE REDMONT, *the former social justice minister of Boston's Paulist Center, is writing a book on American Catholic women.*

JOHN BRANDL *is professor of public affairs at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. He is also a member of the Minnesota Senate.*

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 322)

in today's co-ed who views herself as virtuous and chaste if she defers sex with a man until their fourth date. Female promiscuity results in male students' low respect for co-eds which manifests in its worst form in date rape, the Number 1 sexual-social problem across the nation's campuses.

Paul Covino deplores the reluctance of Catholic colleges to discuss Catholic sexual ethics with students, including those who are "sexually active." Covino and other educators won't begin to make progress on this problem until they purge themselves of euphemistic buzzwords and phrases for promiscuity. Promiscuity is a perfectly respectable straightforward word and is a pejorative only to the fainthearted.

Maureen O'Sullivan highly regards Betty Friedan as a "well-known thinker." Ms. Friedan appears also to have been a slow thinker. In her 1963 book, *The Feminine Mystique*, she put down motherhood and touted careers for women. In recent years, Ms. Friedan apparently has had a change of heart about motherhood ...at a time when women who followed her earlier advice have had a change of life. O'Sullivan's statement that one family income is no longer sufficient is specious, smacks of elitism, and comes across as shaky rationalization for full-time employment of wives.

Robert L. Spaeth's comments are supportive of value-free education, which is rapidly falling from public favor for good reason.

...O'Brien's piece and the responding letters reflect the impressive strength of feminists and libertarians even on Catholic campuses, which one would expect to be strongholds of traditional values.

CHARLES R. EWY

Christians who marry

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: I found Robert L. Spaeth's response to the O'Brien article [March 24] quite interesting. He correctly identified the primary task of a Catholic college as the training of intellect. Far too much has been expected of all our schools, with the result that they trivialize the importance of training the mind through well-meant but often fruitless efforts spent in values clarification, consumer rights, etc.

What Dean Spaeth misses, however, is that the Catholic college is special because it offers more than the secular college. It promises to place the training of the mind in the context of life as a disciple of Jesus. There are few topics that require more careful study and thought for a Christian than love, sex, and marriage in today's America. If these areas of human experience are not subjected to the lights of intellect and grace, we should hardly be surprised if students in Catholic colleges are hardly distinguishable from their counterparts in secular colleges.

Besides, has Dean Spaeth recently checked out the quality of most marriage preparation in the dioceses around this country? They are not as watery as they were fifteen years ago, but they hardly compare with the electrifying truth proposed by Michael Garvey in his response to O'Brien: the "scary fidelity of Jesus, the unique and dangerous ingredient in a Christian marriage."

Thank God men and women filled with that message are roaming our campuses today!

ROBERT J. HAGGERTY

Educating parents

Granger, Ind.

To the Editors: The counterpoising of Robert Spaeth's "Educators Aren't Parents" with Mary Brabeck's "Merging Spheres" [March 24] brought out the basic tensions in David O'Brien's "Sex (How About Love?) on Catholic Campuses." If Spaeth is right that there is nothing intellectual or objective that can be said about love, then there is no point in having Catholic universities, for God is faithful love. Let the students go elsewhere and get their perspectives on love from parents and pastors and parish discussion groups bringing their personal experiences to the reading of *Madame Bovary* and the Gospel of St. John.

Yet Robert Spaeth was only responding in kind to David O'Brien's idea of love talk as a kind of counseling about highly subjective and emotional situations. Both of them have accepted the exclusion of love from the field of intellectual, objective knowledge. Mary Brabeck, on the other hand, explains how this exclusion came about through the masculinizing of colleges and universities, and the equating of intellectual activities with male proclivities.

Spaeth implies that universities shouldn't talk about relationships. But relationships are the only things that universities ever talk about. Physics discusses the relations of matter and energy, quarks and quasars; chemistry the relations of electrons and protons, atoms and molecules; biology the relations of organelles, cells, organs, organisms, and communities....The only good reason Spaeth can give for excluding sexual relation-

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ships is that they're not what the faculty know how to teach. Mary Brabeck explains that, too.

As a biologist, I could outline a course on what evolutionary biology has to say about human relationships, especially sexual relationships. Nearly every academic discipline has something to say about human and sexual relationships and their consequences. If professors don't say it, that's because of prejudice against topics identified with the feminine, and, by definition, non-intellectual proclivities. No wonder they have trouble saying anything about a God who came in the form of a man and in most respects acted like a woman.

In nearly every academic discipline there are frequent occasions when a sufficiently courageous professor could ask, "What is the loving (or unloving) consequence of what we have learned?" It would be an objective question about the consequences of human knowledge and human actions for human good. The question could be more effectively posed and answered if professors from various disciplines got together to learn from one another how to state it. This is another opportunity Catholic universities could provide, but for the tyranny of narrowly specialized professional competence.

JULIAN PLEASANTS

Spoon-sleeping

Woodstock, N.Y.

To the Editors: To Giles Milhaven and his friend, Fergal, congratulations for the article "Sleeping Like Spoons" [April 7]. You have made a stupendous breakthrough. For me, and probably many women, and yes, even some men, you have brought hope and joy in an era of overwhelmingly depressing news—news of all that is violent, fearsome, and evil in our world.

In your article, you have made tenderness newsworthy. Yes, it is crucial that you, as males, wrote those words. Women have been writing them for a long time, but you men have finally understood, and you have felt, and, most grace-filled of all, you have communicated that you understood and felt.

I am extremely grateful to you for thinking it is important to read writers who are women, and that you find something as "ordinary" as "spoon-sleeping" to be a critical component of your life. May thousands read your words and take hope.

SONDRA SPRINKLING

A surprise performance

Setauket, N.Y.

To the Editors: Giles Milhaven's "Sleeping Like Spoons" [April 7] triggered recollection of a paragraph in Martha Weinman Lear's 1980 book *Heartsounds*. Lear uses the phrase "like two spoons" to refer to her marital sleeping position. I had remembered the unusual phrase for so long because it captured my own position of choice. What a surprise to see the term used again, and reflected on so skillfully. A four spoons performance!

WILLIAM F. POWERS

Bodily pleasures

Berkeley, Calif.

To the Editors: Bravo! to John Giles Milhaven ["Sleeping Like Spoons," April 7] for raising the question of eros and embodiment as goods of human life. Milhaven asks for attention to "commonplace, vulgar, precious human eros" and rightly notes that some feminist theologians have begun this task.

Two mistakes are so common in Christian thinking that we never see how badly we are stubbing our toes. The first is thinking that eros means sex. Milhaven points us toward the wider arena: eros means life-force, the push toward bonding, the desire for union which at root seeks the divine. Sex is one locus of eros, but it is not the only one; motherhood, creative work, friendship are others.

But even the struggle to recapture the rightful place of eros can be misleading. For it can make us think that sexual joy, sexual pleasure, is acceptable *only* if it serves the underlying drive for divine union. We fall back into the mistake that Milhaven laments—assuming that there is nothing good about the bodily *per se*, but that it is good only if it serves some other purpose. Hence, sexual pleasure and other forms of passion have to be "justified" in Christian tradition by being "subordinated" to love, procreation, union.

What is wrong with sheer physical joy? What is wrong with sensuous indulgence, with "voluptuous fullness"? These, too, are gifts from God. Watch any cat stretch and conform to the caress of a hand, plying her body to get the full benefit of every inch of touch, and see what a good thing is sheer physical pleasure. The taste of good wine, the smell of a rose, the feel of warm sun on bare skin—must these things be "justified" by being made part of the human agenda for bonding/union? Or are they good in and of themselves? Not until we have the courage to ask this question will we begin to address embodiment and know what it is to have an incarnated God.

KAREN LEBACQZ
Pacific School of Religion

Leaping in the light

Henderson, Nev.

To the Editors: It is always a delight to read a contribution from William J. O'Malley, S.J. ["A Leap in the Light," March 10]. In those long distant days before the reductionists began to dissect spiritual functions into their anatomical parts, that blessed John Henry Newman hit upon the same theme but with a greater sense of poetry. "It is the mind that reasons, and that controls its own reasonings, not any technical apparatus of words and propositions. This power of judging and concluding, when in its perfection, I call the Illative Sense. . ." (*Grammar of Assent*). Perhaps some day we will rediscover Newman. Then I hope that O'Malley will give us another contribution.

REV. CAESAR J. CAVIGLIA

Setting back religion

Van Nuys, Calif.

To the Editors: I couldn't believe my eyes when I read ["A Leap in the Light," March 10] that William O'Malley, S.J., gave his high school religion class the statements "Faith is a blind leap in the dark" and "Morality changes from culture to culture" as *True-False* questions on a test.

I can just see some poor young Kierkegaard or Margaret Mead not getting

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into college because their grade point average suffered due to their religion grade.

If that's the kind of test O'Malley gives his students, he's set high school religion pedagogy back thirty years.

ROGER REPOHL

Limits of true-false

Towson, Md.

To the Editors: If it took William J. O'Malley four closely reasoned pages to explain what he expected his students to know about faith ["A Leap in the Light," March 10] why on earth did he ask them a true-false question about it?

I'll bet if he'd asked them an essay question—"Discuss the paradox of faith," for instance—he would have gotten thoughtful, complex, knowledgeable answers.

ANNETTE CHAPPELL

Faith & science

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: William O'Malley, S.J., in his article, "A Leap in the Light" [March 10], made some wonderful points about what true faith is. But his comparisons between religious faith and science are somewhat off base. He admits the difference between faith and knowledge: he knows his room is painted white, he does not believe that it is. So too, the scientist *knows* that the neutrinos exist, he does not believe in them. He has evidence, sensible, visible signs of the existence of the massless neutral little critter.

Scientists do believe before they know. When the electron was discovered and observed in the cathode ray tube in the late-nineteenth century, since matter was neutral, there had to be a proton. They believed in protons until they had hard evidence for their existence.

Up to a point, the analogy between science and religion can be very insightful. The scientist fulfills Paul's definition of faith ("The substance of things hoped for") much more than many religious "believers" who don't "hope for" anything but just believe what they are told. Scientists "see through a glass darkly" until the day they are actually presented with solid evidence that what they hoped for *really* exists. Now they *know* and no longer believe. And indeed, in their enthusiasm they need neither faith nor hope, only love of what they have discovered.

Too much has been made of Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. It doesn't say that "electrons don't exist," it only says (and some dispute this) that we can't know *everything* about them. I agree entirely with O'Malley's assessment of high school science and the ridiculous labs (I have been fighting the system for thirty years). And I wax eloquent that there are no *final* answers in science. I wouldn't be a science teacher if there were final answers. But there is a difference between the *hypotheses* of science and the established *theories*. Father O'Malley implies in his article that there are no "scientific proofs," only "hypotheses." Hardly. This kind of thinking has led to the "evolution is *only* a theory" school of thought, or even the statement which Father O'Malley made in an earlier article that "evolution is a myth." I'm afraid that most scientists would say that evolution is not a myth, a theory, but a *fact*. The theories concern *how* species evolved (not how life began. That is not what evolution is all about).

...No religious "myth" can be compared to what O'Malley and others claim are "scientific myths." If the TV crews were there on Easter morn or on Ascension day, what would they record? Cameras could record a mutation, however. I find it disturbing that *Commonweal* would print an article that is scientifically naive. O'Malley is certainly entitled to his opinion, but when it flies in the face of what the scientific community holds to be true, without a solid line of argument, his statements don't hold water.

JOSEPH D. CIPARICK

Politics of hope

Northhampton, Mass.

To the Editors: Political scientist Wilson Carey McWilliams exposed the grisly depths to which media packaging of our political process has precipitated the "demobilization" of the electorate ["A Nation of Couch Potatoes," March 10]. But he minimized the ominous lesson of the '88 presidential race: McCarthyism is not dead. In fact, it remains an ideology capable of subverting rational dialogue and capturing elections. What are the sources of hope we might draw upon?

A beginning would be to recall his point that Soviet politics are liberalizing as ours drift toward groupthink. The myth that the U.S. is incapable of becoming totalitarian should be confronted.

Also, if politics is indeed the ability, in the author's words, "to see the present in the light of the possible," we desperately need a collective renewal in our willingness to express both what our present experience is and what we imagine for our future. Only then might the media move aside and let us reclaim our planet.

JAY ALLAIN

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